

Stay underneath my wing

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/31896778) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/31896778>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warnings:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings , Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Dream SMP
Relationships:	Technoblade & TommyInnit (Video Blogging RPF) , Wilbur Soot & Phil Watson , Wilbur Soot & TommyInnit , Wilbur Soot & Technoblade & TommyInnit & Phil Watson
Characters:	TommyInnit (Video Blogging RPF) , Technoblade (Video Blogging RPF) , Wilbur Soot , Phil Watson (Video Blogging RPF)
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Zombie Apocalypse , Kid Fic , Fluff , Found Family , Brotherly Bonding , Wilbur Soot and TommyInnit are Siblings , Family Dynamics , BAMF Technoblade (Video Blogging RPF) , BAMF Phil Watson (Video Blogging RPF) , no beta we die like my sleep schedule , Protective Technoblade (Video Blogging RPF) , Protective Phil Watson (Video Blogging RPF) , Good Parent Phil Watson (Video Blogging RPF) , No Character Death , swear it
Language:	English
Collections:	Purrsonal Picks , my aetwt addiction , MCYT Universe , Family time with dadza techno wilby and toms , favourites , great reads , canon divergence , wow i really am reading mc fanfiction 🥰🥰 , Dream SMP fics that butter my bread , Found family to make me miss the brother i never had , Fanfics I'd eat again at 3 am and already have , SBI Fics for the soul , DSMP_favs , mmm favs , fics to knock your socks off , Tommy poppin' off (SBI maybe too :)) , Vic's_procrastination_fics , lee's favorite fics that you should definitely read as well :) , The best dsmp/sbi fanfics in my opinion , Feral's favorites , My favourite dsmp books , SBI FOUND FAMILY MY BELOVED , Things That Keep Me Up At Night , sob i love these fics sm , Pastels fics , Neats fave c!tommy centric fics , sbi fics that butter my bread , Found family to make me feel something , minecraft fanfics that make my last braincell vibrate at the speed of light , Technoblade and Instincts: The Saga ft. Tommyinnit , SBI fics that give me the will to live , Cross' Collection of DSMP/SBI fics (unfinished) , Mcyt(mostly SBI) fics that I adore , Mar's Big Library (dsmp) , Comfort fics , Best Dream SMP Fanfics , DSMP Fics in my Ultimate Quotebook , Spicy's Gourmet MCYT Extravaganza , I love sbi fics , Good yet incomplete fics , (found) family fics because i crave emotional affection , Found family sbi has my <3 , Fics Spider Likes <33 , super cool fic recs , Mar doesn't know how to handle this it's just so so so good , The best MCYT fics you've ever read , Dsmf fics I like (sprite) , dino's minecraft hyperfixations , Really good fics that I highly reccomend :) , Fics That Butter My Biscuit , bee's personal picks , family? found. mental health?

[significantly improved. hotel? trivago.](#), [Heart eye emoji](#), [what do you mean i have an obsession with minecraft fanfiction?](#), [bee's fics for ariel](#), [God tier fics for 4 am](#), [SBI FICS TO HEAL MY SOUL](#), [Elvie's favourites](#), [Minecraft FF \(DSMP\)](#), [sbi comfort .\)](#), [Annie's Collective](#), [BEDROCK BROSSSS \(sobs w head in hands\)](#), [fics that i think about a lot](#), [Stories that deserves a book cover \(you've seen the tuto ;\)\)](#), [UltraRed's Favorites \(mcyt\)](#), [luciana's fics she would genuinely die for](#), [Found Family is My Coping Mechanism](#), [Stimming isn't enough I have to eat the fic](#), [I swear to god if I start crying I'm blaming youuuu /pos](#), [040](#), [020](#), [when insomnia hits](#), [WOO Insomnia Time](#), [Fics I can and will read again](#), [mcyt fanfic library <3](#), [The Awesome Fics Bookshelf](#), [Fav Techno-Centric Fics \(mostly angst\)](#), [MY FAVORITE OF ALL TIME :DD](#), [Found family my beloved](#), [fics that i absolutely adore](#), [Fics that I'm yet to read \(mostly angst that'll destroy me\)](#), [THESE ARE SO GOOD WHY ARE THEY SO GOOD??!! \(mcyt edition\)](#), [Just the good shit i use instead of sleep](#), [the universe admires these works of art](#), [Sleepy bois](#), [i don't read dsmf fics \(or do i??\)](#), [SBI because im mentally unstable](#), [Apocalypse Extravaganza](#), [i will and can trade my soul for these fics. actually id rather keep my soul](#), [Altes' "Cream of the Crop" top rated DSMP fics](#), [I love this. This is the best. this is not for debate.](#), [wanna listen later](#), [DSB\(DreamSmpBooks\)](#), [my fav fics ever - mostly sbi that are tommy centric](#), [a collection of every dsmf fic i've read](#), [DSMP fics that are pure gold](#), [wined and dined](#), [kaisloermoment](#), [I've read these but they're still being updated and I'm a puddle on the floor](#), [tea's favorites](#), [fishbowl to do](#), [the graveyard of my feelings](#)

Stats:

Published: 2021-06-12 Updated: 2025-04-29 Words: 152,469 Chapters: 34/?

Stay underneath my wing

by [sircantus](#)

Summary

"Wilby says that- that if a stranger ever tries to grab me, I can bite them." Tommy nods, giving a little glare towards Techno and his bitten hand.

"Okay." Technoblade says slowly. "But don't bite me."

"No, I'm gonna bite you."

SBI Zombie apocalypse AU, in which Tommy is a little kid who's been separated from Wilbur. While Wilbur is on a desperate search for his little brother with Phil, Tommy stumbles across Technoblade, who is the definition of 'no chill' in the zombie apocalypse.

Techno accidentally gains a new little brother.

Notes

This brainrot has me by the NECK, this is all I'm going to be writing for the next few days, oh man

Hope you enjoy! I dedicate this fic to Eneli, because she's so cool.

- Translation into Русский available: [Оставайся под моим крылом](#) by [Inaila](#)

Found a kid in a store, now what

There's a certain type of mindset you need to have in order to really last in the apocalypse.

With the blood-thirsty zombies, the constant death, the never ending conflicts between survivor groups, you need something to live for. If you have a weak will to live, you're as good as dead, about as useful as the stumbling creatures walking around outside.

Personally, Technoblade is alive out of spite.

When society as a whole started to quickly unravel, when things went from somewhat contained to terrible chaos, Technoblade, by all means, should have absolutely died.

First week of the outbreak, he got tackled by a zombie, miraculously didn't get bitten, and was able to get away while people were trying to get the 'person' to a hospital of some sort. While he was figuring out a way to get out of the chaos, the undead were starting to get more common, and the slow realization of something terribly wrong was settling into people's minds.

Third week of the outbreak, things had gone downhill really fast, and there was an awful amount of bloodshed on the streets. Technoblade might've been the cause of some of those bloodstains, he won't say.

He had gotten into a car crash, got away from that with a bad limp, and he then added a few more bloodstains to the street. To his luck, he was able to get into a survivor camp, where there was some semblance of order, and at least some medical care.

Fifth week, he almost got shot in the head, thanks to a trigger-happy idiot and an argument over food that didn't really make much sense. They were all starving, at that point. He supposes any sort of logic got lost in the starvation.

That week, Technoblade killed a human for the first time, by slamming a bat into someone's skull and hearing it *crack* .

That survivor camp went really downhill after that.

The point here is that Technoblade really should be dead, by all means, and yet he still walks. With a slight limp in his step and a healing scab across his nose, but he's still walking.

After the absolute dumpster fire of the survivor camp, Technoblade set out on his own, and left that disaster behind. He was better on his own, survived better on his own, and he didn't die.

He couldn't die. Ever. (He refused to.)

No matter what the apocalypse threw at him, he was determined to live through it, and gain some power while he was at it. He had a knack for killing zombies, and a lack of hesitation in life-or-death situations. That alone made him a bit more capable, and a bit more dangerous than most.

While others would still hesitate at pulling the trigger, Technoblade pulled it without a second thought. At this point, the blood that stained his hands would never come off, but if it's in exchange for him being able to survive, then he'll stain his hands a little more.

Technoblade traveled on his own and stayed on his own. He scavenged for supplies, looked for weapons, and mowed down any zombies that were in his path. He was on a mission. Did he know what the end goal was? Not really. But he was reaching it, one way or another.

Survivors started to dwindle as the months passed and zombies kept on multiplying. Technoblade saw death often, and caused death often. At first, he tried to keep his bullets aimed towards the undead only. But sometimes the living are more dangerous than the dead, and after everything Technoblade has been through, he refuses to die to someone with a gun and a grudge.

He didn't mean to gain a reputation, but he got one anyway. He was oblivious to the talk that surrounded him, but he was well aware of the threats that could come his way. To him, he knew that people were wary, and heard about the sheer amount of zombies he had killed. (However, he didn't know about the nickname of "The Blood God" they were giving him, and he certainly didn't realize that he was quite literally becoming some sort of folk tale from the bloodshed he left behind.)

After a few months, traveling got boring.

He could only go so far before his leg acted up, and he was quite literally leaving a trail of dead zombies in his path. It was slow going.

He wanted a safe base to retreat to, but didn't want a repeat of the first survivor group he had gotten into. So he picked a city, got a map of its streets, and got to work.

If there's one thing that Technoblade knows, it's that he's persistent. Persistent with being alive, and persistent with his goals, when he really becomes set on them.

Most cities are abandoned by any survivors, because of the zombie hoards that travel through that make it too dangerous to travel across. It's too closed in, too risky.

Any groups that try to stay inside get snuffed out within a few weeks, either by hoards getting past their defenses, or their own conflicts killing them from the inside out. Technoblade has seen it before. It's a constant cycle, with no sense of permanence.

Sure, there's a few towns that really stay sturdy, like the big names with the communities that have stayed relatively peaceful. Those ones are put together, with systems and walls that stay steady. Technoblade has thought about going there a few times, maybe finding a spot there where he might even settle, but he's not fond of people. And he's not fond of conflict that is bound to rise up.

So he makes his own 'town'.

By picking a building to be his base, then killing every zombie in a mile radius.

(There's a reason people call him "The Blood God")

The work is tedious. Techno spends a solid month just clearing out the streets, painting them red with the zombie parts left behind.

He's lucky enough to come across a literal sword in the first week, a metal blade that's tucked away underneath a rotting corpse. He gives thanks to the person that had a *sword* in the zombie apocalypse, and then promptly becomes that person with a sword in a zombie apocalypse.

Techno finds a lot more within the city, more weapons, more supplies, and he tells himself that before he can start bringing the goods back to the base, he has to clear out the big crowds of zombies that plague the streets.

He's glad to find a metal file in someone's apartment a few days after he finds the sword, because after the amount of killing he has to do, the sword needs to be sharpened rather often. And his knives, too. And his axe.

Frankly, all of his weapons get good use, and all of them become absolutely stained with red.

At that point, Technoblade is honestly tired of the constant killing, the constant blood. He's entirely numb to it, zombies are little more than pests in his mind, and they're tedious to mow down.

He takes the time to find a car that still works, and figures out how to get it to work.

He then uses the car to speed up the process of cleaning out his streets, and runs over a zombie horde while trying to think of what he might be able to cook for dinner.

Techno gets creative with it. He keeps a mental tally, counts each zombie he kills off, then does something special for the hundredth one. He drops a brick off a roof, aims it for a zombie's head and watches the thing fall to the ground with a thump and a bloody splatter.

He takes his sword and knife and meticulously cuts away the jaw and arms of a zombie, rendering it to be completely harmless, just a stumbling creature that keeps trying to attack Techno. All it can really do is bump against him, though. He then pushes it around a bit, then plays an unfair game of fisticuffs, just to see how hard he can land a punch.

For the fifth hundredth zombie, he takes some gasoline and a box of matches, and you can guess where that one went.

Surprisingly, zombies can still walk pretty far while entirely on fire. Technoblade had actually walked backwards for a whole block, letting a flaming zombie follow after him, and he watched in curiosity as the thing barely acknowledged it was on fire, only staying determined to try and kill Techno.

Technoblade takes that experience as proof that zombies really don't die unless you kill off the brain. Even heads stay moving until you destroy the brain, he's found out after several decapitations.

It takes a solid month to kill the majority of them, and to clear away the bodies. It gets to a point where there's makeshift walls of dead zombies at the end of his territory, and while Technoblade thinks it's kinda gross, he supposes it could also work as a deterrent. He makes barriers that are normal, made of wood and metal, and then makes ones that are only about four feet tall, but are still a giant pile of zombie bodies.

He keeps the 'walls' up. (And stays blissfully oblivious to the stories of "The Blood God" claiming his land. Stories of the walls made of dead zombies, hundreds of them, a silent warning, because if *all* those zombies were killed, do you really want to meet the individual who killed them?)

The second month, he focuses on bringing supplies back to his base.

The first part of his base is a low building, not as high as the skyscrapers over his head, and it looks like it used to be some sort of office place before everything went south. Technoblade doesn't think too hard about it, he just counts the rooms, moves out the furniture, and moves in.

With basically a whole part of the city to himself, there's a *lot* of supplies, and he has plenty of food, plenty of water. It's too much to just have with him all at once, so he uses that building purely for storage. He moves in shelves he's taken from other buildings and he puts tape down on the floor to make some sort of organization system.

He takes numbers, writes it down in a notebook, and makes sure to continue to count numbers every week, in case anything goes missing. He wants to stay vigilant, just in case any people wander in, steal his stuff. Maybe he's a bit paranoid, but he has good reason to be in this world.

All the doors are shut behind lock and key, heavy metal chains wrapped around the handles to keep it secure. The supplies inside are just extra stuff he can't keep in his main base, so he's not entirely worried about constantly protecting it, but he doesn't exactly want any intruders to be wandering in either.

There's an apartment building next to his 'storagehouse', and he goes through the whole building and clears it out within the first week of coming to the city. The elevator there obviously doesn't work, power having been something that disappeared in the first month that everything went sideways, so Technoblade has to take the stairs.

He's not very happy about it, but it's his only option, unless he wants to try figuring out a way to get back power to his area of the city. However, that's not something he's ready to tackle. He's persistent for sure, but he's not a technician.

After the building is empty of zombies, Techno chooses the biggest and cleanest-looking apartment there, and makes it his home, stocking up the kitchen with whatever he has, and wiping down the walls.

The first night when he's able to sleep in a bed, an actual, clean, comfortable bed, Technoblade sleeps right through the morning, into the afternoon. He very nearly considers just staying there for the rest of the day so he can nap.

It's tempting, but he does eventually get up, so he can scrub at the bloodstain in the middle of the kitchen.

The living room couch is stained with blood, so Technoblade throws the couch off the balcony and replaces it with one he grabbed from another apartment. He's able to salvage the rug, scrub it out until the bloodstain is just very faint. He puts away the TV in a closet, and uses the extra space to put his weapons, hanging them up on the wall. He finds a radio, puts batteries in, and gets static.

He's not sure why he expected anything else.

The radio is capable of playing CD's, though, so Techno takes the time to look through the apartment a little more, and finds a box of CD's underneath the bed. He deep cleans the room after that, taking out anything that he doesn't want to keep, and puts on a song to play. It's something classical that Technoblade can't really put his finger on, but he finds it enjoyable anyway, and lets it play while he mops the kitchen.

The cabinets become stocked to the brim with cans of food, and Technoblade then works on stocking up ingredients, after finding a cookbook as well. He's not yet ready to actually start cooking and making meals, but it's definitely something he wants as a project, so he puts it away, and also searches for pots and pans, clean spoons, forks, knives from the other apartments in the building. He stocks the kitchen until he has everything he needs, and he then goes to move on to the other rooms of the house.

For example, his bedroom.

Technoblade quickly realizes he's absolutely entitled to have the best bed ever, and after a lot of consideration, he takes apart another bed from another apartment, and moves it to his, joining it up with the other bed so he simply just has more room.

Taking any pillows he can get, he accumulates a pile of blankets, a few plushies, and takes a long nap after he's made the best bed ever.

He wakes up with the sun gone and his sleep schedule a bit skewed, but it's entirely worth it.

After he's declared his apartment fully stocked and cleaned, he moves to see the rooftop of the apartment building, which, to his surprise, has a greenhouse. It's a bit pathetic, and terribly overgrown, but there's definitely potential for more, and someone who actually knows how to garden could figure out how to use it. For a moment, Technoblade wants to turn his back on it and just use his food that he already has, but then again, a garden would truly make him self-sustainable.

He puts it away as a project for later, just like with the cookbook.

The second month is somehow even longer than the first month, with all the moving and cleaning and making sure things are just right.

Zombies being a threat is kinda laughable at this point, since he cleared out so many, and they've become rare in his territory.

However, a few survivors wander inside and come across Technoblade in the middle of his work.

Techno takes the opportunity to make it very clear about how he does not want visitors in his territory.

The first group of survivors are just three people, skittish and running away the moment Technoblade goes towards them. They leave on their own, no guidance needed.

The second encounter is with a loud duo, who call out Technoblade where he stands and try to start a conversation.

Technoblade responds by firing his gun into the air, and they run off, but not out of his streets. So, he follows them, keeps trailing behind them and forcing them to run, shooting as if he's trying to kill them, when really, he's just chasing until they're out of his city.

When they're finally past the barriers and leaving his streets, Technoblade stands at the border with a sword resting on his shoulder, watching them both back away with wary glances behind them. They stare at Technoblade with baffled faces, and Technoblade just stays standing with his sword, making the point clear to not turn around and come back.

By the third encounter, Technoblade is very much completely done with any sort of visitors, so he tries to be as unapproachable as possible, and tries to scare the hell out of them, so maybe it'll get the point across. He wants to be alone, thank you very much, and he doesn't want survivors coming in here and getting comfy.

He worked hard to make it clean, dammit. He refuses to let others taint it.

Wearing a gas mask he had found in the city, Techno pulls his hair back and lets it stay in a loose ponytail behind him. He takes an axe in one hand and a small gun in the other, and stands in the middle of the street.

At night.

Needless to say, the moment their flashlights land on him, screams ring out in alarm, and he runs out of sight before they can start shooting. He repeats the process, popping up in the dark, following at their heels with loud footsteps, dragging his sword across the wall to make a loud scratching noise.

It's a bit fun, to be honest, watching the survivors squirm and try to escape an unknown threat, and just before they're about to leave past one of the barricades at the end of the road, Technoblade lunges at one of them.

He kicks the person he thinks might be the leader and lets them hit the floor. He leans down towards them as their group yells and panics, stumbling back from a stranger that has come out of the shadows too quickly to process.

“Stay. *Out.*” Technoblade had said quietly, getting a frantic nod in response.

And he then left just like that, leaving them in disarray.

Survivors came a lot less often after that. He assumes that word spread.

(Word did indeed spread, and while he thought he was just being intimidating, he was actually quite terrifying to the point of fueling the rumors like gasoline on a fire. At this point, The Blood God was a title, and people thought his territory was actually cursed. Or blessed. Depends on the person, really. Either way, people knew not to enter.)

After that, Techno takes the time to finish up with fortifying the outside of his main base, and cleans up his storage-house a bit.

Once his apartment is fortified well, and his storage-house is locked up tight, Technoblade goes to sleep, and wakes up late the next morning to do a routine walk, so he can check the streets he owns for any wandering survivors or zombies. He expects it to be empty, like usual, and plans on getting back home quickly, so he can start the project of that greenhouse on the roof.

He finds a dog.

A starving dog, one that's barely just skin and bones, limping along, too tiny to be surviving. It must've squeezed through the barriers that Techno had put up, and it had gotten far with no threats of zombies walking around.

Technoblade approaches the little thing carefully, knowing it could still bite, and he gets a growl with each step. There's no collar, and it's fur is matted and dirty, brown with mud and

dried blood, perhaps.

At first, Techno considers trying to pick it up, but he doesn't exactly want to get bit.

So instead, he starts to go back to his base, to maybe get some food and try to coax it over to him instead. Except, there's no need, because when he starts to walk away, the dog begins to follow. At a distance, carefully, but still following Techno.

With that, Techno walks slower than usual, and lets the dog follow him all the way back, where he then quickly goes inside to get a can of food.

After that offer of food, Techno finds that he can't get rid of the dog, because it will not leave him alone.

He names it Floof, because he's uncreative, and it's fur is fluffy after Techno's given it a bath in a metal bucket. Some of the parts of its fur are still matted, though, so Techno snips those parts away, and leaves it with a ridiculous haircut for a few minutes before just snipping the rest of the hair away as well, so it can grow back even.

He's careful with feeding it, wanting the dog to get back to full health, but not throw up, with the way it seems to breathe in any food in sight. Technoblade is a bit annoyed to admit Floof has stolen the food right out of his hands at least three times already, when he wasn't paying proper attention.

With a new dog at his side that's getting back to a healthy weight, Technoblade takes the time then to pick up gardening, so he can wrangle that greenhouse up on the roof. He focuses on getting rid of all the weeds, and overgrown plants, then works on seeing what he has to work with.

After some time, and a lot of cleaning and getting his hands dirty, (With dirt, and not blood, for once) Technoblade focuses on farming potatoes, because that's what he finds.

Only potatoes, actually.

Did the madman who owned this greenhouse just farm potatoes?

Either way, Technoblade carries on that legacy, and spends his weeks tending to the crops, cleaning the apartment, counting up his stock of supplies and also taking walks around his territory with Floof.

Life actually...starts to kinda settle down.

Technoblade never thought he could have something nice of a home in a world like this, but he thinks he's gotten pretty close to finding it.

After a year and then some of the apocalypse fully breaking out and everything going terribly, Technoblade finds something like a home again, with a cookbook he's trying to figure out, and a fluffy dog nipping at his ankles to try and get a treat.

Technoblade wakes up in the morning with a dog on top of him, and he groans and pushes it off, trying to not get licked across the face.

"Floof, no." Technoblade mutters, turning over in his bed. A snout sticks into his neck, making him jolt. "No! Wha- Get down, get off the bed."

Floof listens, jumping off the bed and trotting away out into the kitchen for breakfast. Technoblade face-plants into his pillow with a sigh. After a moment, he gets up, goes to change clothes, and pulls his hair back into a braid. It's gotten long now, and while Technoblade could cut it, he finds that he likes it long.

It gives him a sense of control, in a way, a spiteful decision in showing the universe and the apocalypse that even though the undead is trying to kill everything and it tore life as he knew it apart, Techno still very much took the time to grow his hair out, care for it, and make it *pink*.

Yeah, that was an impulse decision. And maybe a waste of water, too, but he can't take it back, so his hair is just a light pink now.

He's made a note to not make decisions at ungodly times of the night. He needs more sleep.

And maybe more pink hair dye, while he's at it. His roots have been growing out for a while, the brown color of his hair coming back, and Techno should probably get around to touching those up.

A bark comes from the kitchen, yanking Techno away from his thoughts.

"Uhg." He adjusts his braid in the mirror, rubbing the last bits of sleep out of his eyes.

Another bark.

"I'm going!" Techno calls, walking over to the kitchen, taking his knife from his nightstand as he does, and putting it away. He still keeps weapons on him, even in the apartment, just because of habit. It lets him breathe easier.

Technoblade goes to feed Floof, then opens up the window blinds, yawning as the sunlight comes through and lights up the whole place. He shuffles over to the kitchen with not that much enthusiasm, and begins on making food for the day.

He takes a pot out of the cabinets, follows a recipe for some sort of soup. Floof plays around with his toys in the living room as Technoblade squints at the words written down, and tries to properly measure ingredients.

The apartment fills with the smell of food that could actually be pretty good, and Floof eventually makes his way back into the kitchen, sitting at Techno's feet, obviously waiting to be the taste tester.

"This is soup." Techno tells him, stirring the pot. "You can't have this."

Floof continues to stare, as if Technoblade is just taking his time with giving Floof a piece of breakfast.

"No." Technoblade stresses. "Go. Go play with your ball." He nudges the dog with his foot, having the dog jump around a bit around him, trying to play. "I'm cooking, Floof."

A bark.

"Where's your ball? Go get it for me, go." Technoblade says, but he steps away from the stove anyway to retrieve the ball himself. He chucks it across the apartment, and watches the dog zip fast him to catch it as it bounces against the wall.

Techno returns to his soup, and serves himself a bowl.

He sits at the kitchen table while eating, reading a book that he had left there last night. Some sort of story of mythological tales, gods and such. Techno found it in an old dusty box a few buildings down the street.

Technoblade eats his breakfast, finishes up reading a chapter for the book, then goes to get ready to go out. He passes Floof, who chews on one of his toys like it's his sole mission.

"Come on, Floof." Techno calls, and he leaves the apartment with a sword on his hip and a gas mask in hand. Floof follows at his heels.

The gas mask is a recent thing, since Techno doesn't want to come across any survivors with just his face. He's only used it once, from that time to scare away survivors. The mask has an intimidating vibe to it, he thinks that's useful if he ever finds anyone else wandering in his territory.

Techno goes on his usual walk, mostly just to get Floof's morning energy out, and to check out the perimeter for if anything changed.

It goes normally, until Floof runs past him, barking non-stop, and making a bee-line into what used to be a small shop, it's shelves now knocked over and supplies already emptied out.

Techno chases, walks quickly into the store with careful steps, thinking Floof has found a trespasser, someone who went past the barriers and needs to be kicked out. He keeps a hand on his sword, keeps an eye out for a stray survivor who thought this was a good place to lay low.

He finds a kid.

You're my friend now, we're having soft tacos later!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

There's a kid, a literal *child* inside of Technoblade's territory. Somehow, that thought is absolutely terrifying, more so than the undead creatures that have taken over the world.

Technoblade isn't good with kids, ok?

Floof won't stop barking at the kid, sticking his head into the little gap of where they're hiding. It's a toppled over shelf, too heavy for Techno to lift out of the way, but he doesn't think he'll need to move it. He just needs to coax the kid out of there.

Floof isn't helping, since he's been barking non-stop, seconds away from squeezing through the little gap to grab the kid, attack them, or something. Technoblade's taught Floof to do that, but only to zombies and anyone who's considered a threat.

Technoblade nudges his boot into the dog's side. "Floof. Stop it."

The dog doesn't seem to listen, instead barking once more, paws scratching at the ground to try and get through the gap, and Technoblade kneels down, grabs the dog by the fur before it can get anywhere.

There's a quiet panicked crying coming from underneath the shelf, and Technoblade feels just an ounce of guilt creep into his chest.

"*Stop.*" Technoblade stresses, and Floof hears the tone in his voice, strained and serious. The dog steps back, and Techno points beside him, away from the gap. "*Sit.*" Thankfully, the dog listens without having to be told twice. Technoblade huffs from behind his mask, then turns back to the shelf.

There's still crying, a bit muffled now, but still easy to hear. Techno really doesn't want to deal with a crying kid, but he really doesn't want a kid in his territory at all. If a kid is here, then the kid has to belong to someone, and that means there's going to be other survivors searching around, trying to find their child.

And Techno hates intruders.

He leans down on his knees, looking through the gap underneath the shelf, and he can just barely make out a little kid, curled up into a ball with their knees pressed to their chest. He can't make out the face, since they're crying with arms covering their face.

"Hey." Technoblade tries, and he gets a little hiccup in response, the crying only continuing. "Hey, kid."

Eyes peek up towards Techno, the lower part of the kid's face still hidden with their arms, but their eyes wide and tear-filled, nearly scared.

The kid looks like a little boy. From the lack of light in here and in the little spot the kid is hiding in, Technoblade can't really see much details, but he can see that the kid is wearing a dirty pair of shorts, and a jacket that really oughta be washed. There's blood on the ground, and Techno's heart jumps a bit at the thought of the kid being hurt.

"Hey, I know you can hear me." Technoblade says, leaning in a bit more, squinting through the dark. "What's your name?"

There's the sound of sniffing, wide eyes blinking at him. He can see the boy scoot back just the smallest bit.

Technoblade holds back a sigh, and instead tells himself to be patient, especially with a kid. Most adults have reason. Most. Kids, though, in this world? Too easily scared and too naive.

“My name is Technoblade.” He introduces, leaning a hand onto the shelf. “My dog was barking at you because we’re not used to people being around here. How did you get here?”

Technoblade can faintly hear the quiet breaths coming from the kid who must be trying to calm down.

“...that’s a stupid name.” He hears, and Technoblade blinks. “Teno-blade?”

“*Tech.*” Techno corrects. “Technoblade. Like, technology.”

“That’s not your *name*.” The kid accuses, almost sassy with how he says it, like he knows Technoblade must be lying to him. “That’s a dumb name.”

“Well, it’s my name.” Techno deadpans. “And you’re being unnecessarily mean to me.”

“Yeah, because your dog was going to kill me.” The kid snaps back.

Technoblade sighs, glancing back at said dog. Floof is trying to eat a stray fly from where he’s sitting. That dog has torn out the necks of zombies before, but you could never tell from the way Floof tends to have less than intimidating habits.

Like eating flies.

“His name is Floof, and he was barking at you because you were a stranger. Who is currently trespassing on *my* territory.” Techno says, leaning back down.

“This isn’t your territory.”

“Did you by any chance see a bunch of walls out at the end of the streets, clearly blocking off this part of the city?” Techno asks, a bit of exasperation creeping into his voice. “I have those around my territory, to keep people out.”

“Oh.” He gets as a response.

“Yeah, oh.” Technoblade repeats. “What’s your name?” He starts off easy.

There’s a beat of hesitation, the kid seeming to look around where he is for a moment, maybe for an escape, but he’s trapped in there with the only way out being blocked by Technoblade.

“...Tommy.” Tommy answers, careful.

“Ok, Tommy.” Techno nods. “Why are you here, under the shelf?”

“I fell and hurt my leg.” Tommy explains. “I wanted to stop and see if it was bleeding a lot, but it isn’t good to stand still in the open, so I looked for somewhere to hide. Then your dog tried to kill me.”

Technoblade hums a bit, pleasantly satisfied with the fact the kid has some self-preservation skills, knowing he shouldn’t stand out in the open street. “He wasn’t going to kill you.”

“He was barking at me!” Tommy protests. “He was going to bite me!”

“Floof just wanted to know if you were a zombie or a bad guy or something.” Technoblade sighs, leaning back and looking around. He glances out onto the street, finding it to be as barren as always, and Floof hasn’t gone running off barking again, so there must not be anyone around.

So where did the kid come from?

“That’s a funny name.” Tommy comments. “Floof. That’s a lot better than Ten-no-blade.” He sounds out the syllables and once again butchers the pronunciation.

“*Technoblade*.” Techno corrects once more. “Where’d you come from, Tommy?”

“Outside.”

“Okay...” Technoblade thinks a bit. “You saw the walls, didn’t you?”

“Yeah.” Tommy nods. “Some were made of dead zombies. I *really* didn’t want to go in after seeing that, but I was the only one small enough to go through one of the normal walls, so I went through.”

The only one small enough, Techno thinks. So he had a group, who wanted to get past the barriers.

Techno pauses. They sent a *child* in?

That already sets off a few alarms. Technoblade isn’t exactly high on morals, but he at the very least knows that sending a kid by himself in here is just wrong.

“Who made you go inside?” Technoblade asks.

A moment passes with no answer, and Technoblade looks back through the gap, finding the kid to just be staring down at his shoes.

“Tommy?”

“...stupid people.” Tommy answers, and he sounds absolutely pissed off. “I said *no*, because I didn’t *want* to, because there were a bunch of dead zombies! And there were probably zombies in here too! But he said that if I went in through the not-zombie wall, then maybe we would go back to find Wil.”

“Wil?” Technoblade asks quietly.

“But he was lying again!” Tommy yells, his voice wavering in a way that promises crying in the near future. “He’s a fucking liar-!”

“Who lied to you?” Technoblade tries to ask, wanting to cut off the crying before it starts. “Did your group send you in here?”

“They’re *not* my group.” Tommy spits out.

“Then who were you with?”

“Dream.” Tommy mutters, almost too low for Techno to hear. “I don’t want to go back.”

“Well, you can’t stay here.”

“Yes I can! Watch me.” Tommy yells, with a new passion. “They were too scared to come in here, so I can hide until they go away! Then, I’m going to go on my own, and I’m going to fight any zombies in my way, and find Wil.”

Technoblade blinks. “Will?”

“He’s my brother.”

“Ah.” Techno huffs. “And, he’s in the group with you?”

“No.” Tommy says bitterly. “They took me away from him.”

Technoblade leans back on his knees, trying to process that a bit. Those words set off all kinds of alarms in his head, and he doesn’t like the current heavy feeling that’s weighing on his chest. This sounds like some sort of kidnapping situation, which, in this world, probably isn’t all that uncommon. The idea of a kid being taken from his family makes Technoblade a bit...ticked off.

“Okay. So, there’s a guy named Dream. He’s in a group, which you were with. They sent you in here, right?”

Tommy gives a sound of approval.

“And they took you away from your brother, Wil. Do you know where your brother is?”

“No.” Tommy admits, almost embarrassed. “Dream says he’s dead, but he’s not dead! I know he’s not. I just need to find him.”

Technoblade sighs. “Okay. Why don’t you come out here?”

“Is your dog going to kill me?”

“No.” Techno deadpans. “No, Floof only attacks bad people.”

“Hmmm.”

Technoblade tries to think. “You come out here, and I’ll try and help you find your group again.”

“No, I don’t *want* to go back to that group.” Tommy disagrees. “You have to promise to help me find Wilby.”

“Why me?” Technoblade asks. “Listen, I’m not going to go anywhere outside of my territory to look for your ‘Wilby’. I just want you outside of my walls, and preferably with people who won’t let you die.”

“Then you have to promise to let me stay until Wilby gets here!” Tommy settles on instead. “I know he’s looking for me, so I can stay here-”

“No, that’s not-” Technoblade hits his palm into his face, sighing. “I’m not going to help you. I’m just going to put you outside.”

“Then you’re stupid, *Teno-blade*, and I’m staying here.” Tommy stays stubborn, and he seems to curl up more underneath the shelf. “Either you help me find Wil, or you go away, so I can find him myself.”

Techno feels like he’s at the end of his rope now. He leans back down towards the gap and reaches an arm in, getting a high-pitched scream in response as he grabs at the kid’s sleeve.

Teeth sink into his hand, and he jerks back, heart racing from the sudden reminder of the threat of zombies, infection, and-

“Bitch!” Tommy swears, quickly washing away Techno’s worries with pure exasperation taking its place. “Go away, I don’t like you, you’re dumb, and your name is dumb, and your dog is dumb *and* mean-”

“You bit me.” Technoblade mutters, looking over his hand. There’s a slight red mark from it, but it didn’t break skin, and it’s not really that painful. More annoying, if anything. He leans

back to look at the kid. “You *bit* me.”

“Yeah!” Tommy answers, as if there’s more from where that came from. “Wilby says that—that if a stranger ever tries to grab me, I can bite them.” Tommy gives a little glare towards Technoblade’s direction, specifically his bitten hand.

“Okay.” Technoblade says slowly. That’s somewhat good advice for a kid to follow. “But don’t bite me.”

“No, I’m gonna bite you.” Tommy nods. “You tried to grab me.”

“Because I’m trying to get you out of here, so we can go look for your group and I can get you out of my territory already.” Technoblade says, trying to give a sense of urgency to his words.

“And I don’t wanna go, so I’m staying here.” Tommy huffs, stubborn to the end.

Technoblade narrows his eyes. “How *old* are you?”

“How old are *you*?”

“I asked first.”

“I asked second!”

Technoblade huffs. “Okay, you know what, fine, stay here. I’m going to go look for your group, Floof can watch you-” Technoblade rises up from the ground, stretching his arms up. He should probably go check by the barriers, look for any survivors lingering around. There’s bound to be some, with a kid on his own, sent out here-

“No!” Tommy yells, and the desperate tone makes Technoblade unable to take a single step.
“No, wait, don’t leave!”

“I’m here.” Technoblade responds, looking out into the street. “I haven’t left yet.”

“You can’t just leave me here.”

“Well, I’m not going to just stick around.”

There’s a long minute of silence, and Technoblade takes a step back, seeming to send Tommy into another bout of panic.

“I’m eight!” Tommy yells. Technoblade feels guilt roll down his back at the sound of desperation in the kid’s voice. “I’m almost eight.”

“So you’re seven.”

“No, I’m almost eight.” Tommy insists. “My birthday is in a month.”

Techno hums, crossing his arms across his chest. “Alright. I’m twenty-four.” He doesn’t get a response from that. “Are you going to come out of there now?”

“Are you going to take me back to Dream?”

“Yes.” Technoblade answers, and the word tastes a bit bitter in his mouth, for some reason. “I can’t just keep you here.”

“I don’t want to go back.” Tommy protests.

“You can’t stay here.”

“Please?”

“Come out of there.” Technoblade says again, getting a sad noise back.

“Technoblade, *please*.” Tommy pleads, and Technoblade-

He sighs, tapping his foot against the ground. There’s a tug on his chest that he wishes would go away, and he can’t even believe the next words that come out of his mouth. “Look, let’s go find your group, and maybe I’ll think about it after I meet them.”

“You’ll let me stay?!” Tommy exclaims.

Technoblade grimaces. God, why did he say that. “No, I’ll think about it.” Which also means no. Technoblade is going to find the kid’s group, give the kid back and make them turn the other direction and never come his way ever again. “You can’t just stay here.”

“I’d rather stay with you than Dream.”

Technoblade rolls his eyes. How flattering. “Wow, you hate the guy that much?”

“He took me away from *Wilbur*.” Tommy hisses. “I hate him so much.”

“So,” Technoblade takes a step back, crouching down to look at Tommy once more. “Where is Wilbur, anyway?”

“I dunno.” Tommy answers, seeming to hesitate, then he works on crawling out of the shelf he was hiding under. Technoblade blinks a bit in surprise as he takes in the state of the kid, dirty and disheveled, blond hair that really oughta be brushed, and a leg that’s covered in blood. “But I know he’s not dead. I saw him, he got away from the zombies. But Dream thinks he died, and he won’t *believe* me.”

“You’re bleeding.” Technoblade points out, Tommy sitting on the floor with a huff.

“Yeah, I fell.” Tommy deadpans, looking at the injury. “It kinda hurts.”

“Can you walk?” Technoblade asks, standing up once again, a hand resting on the sword on his hip. He really rather not carry this kid the whole way.

“Yes, I can.” Tommy responds, almost spiteful, and he struggles to push himself on his feet, standing very tilted to the side, as to not put too much pressure on his bleeding leg. It looks like he fell on the street, scratched his right knee against the concrete. Technoblade can’t be too sure with all the blood.

“You need help?” Technoblade asks, not even sure how to give help, but Tommy refuses anyway.

“No! I can walk, let’s go.” He looks up at Techno, his face scrunching up into something confused. “You have a mask.” He comments, like he just noticed.

“Yup.” Techno turns and walks out of the building, calling Floof and letting Tommy follow behind. “I’m not taking it off.” He answers, before Tommy can even ask.

“Why are you wearing it?” Tommy asks, struggling to keep up. Techno walks a bit slower, Floof walking right beside him.

“It’s an intimidation thing.”

“Well, I’m not intimidated, so I don’t think it’s working.” Tommy limps a bit, and Technoblade makes a displeased face underneath his mask.

“Are you sure you can walk?” He asks, turning around to Tommy.

“Yes, I can.” Tommy frowns intensely. “I’m not *weak*, I can walk.”

“I’m not saying you are. But you’re bleeding out of your knee, and that’s a bit concerning.”

“Well, you’re wearing a mask, Tech-no-blade, so you’re weird.”

“That has nothing to do-” Techno sighs a bit. “Okay. Let’s just keep going.”

They continue to make their way down the street, Techno leading the way and walking a bit slow so Tommy doesn’t need to struggle to catch up.

“Where’s your group?” Tommy asks, after a solid minute of silence. The kid can’t seem to stay quiet.

“I don’t have one.” Technoblade answers, looking down the road, thinking of which wall Tommy might’ve come from. Can’t have been the zombie one, since Tommy didn’t like that one, clearly, so maybe there was a gap in his other ones that he hadn’t noticed. He’ll need to fix that.

“But this place is so big! Where’s the people?”

“I’m the people.” Techno responds. “This is my territory, I told you. All of this is mine, and mine alone. I don’t like people coming in here. Hence, the walls, which you got past.”

“It’s not my fault there was a hole.” Tommy mutters. “I came from this way.” He says helpfully, pointing down a certain direction, and Techno goes that way. “Okay, but you have to have someone around here.”

“I don’t.”

“Where’s your family?”

“They were gone way before the apocalypse.”

“Oh.” Tommy frowns, trying to think. “Okay, then where’s your friends? You had to have one friend.”

“I did have a friend, actually.” Technoblade tilts his head, humming a bit. “He was a really good one, too, I met him just before the zombies started killing everybody.”

Techno is fairly sure he’d probably be dead by now if he hadn’t gotten that help at the start of the apocalypse. If he was completely on his own, while he didn’t know what he was doing, it would’ve been entirely hopeless.

He adapted, though. And after that car crash in the early weeks, Techno learnt to be on his own. The experience with the survivor camp just made him even more prone to independence.

“Where is he, then? Is he in one of the buildings?” Tommy asks, looking around as if he’ll spot someone.

“No.” Technoblade says. “He’s dead.”

Tommy stops walking. “Oh. Is he a zombie?” He asks, and Technoblade slows in his walking as well.

“Probably.” Technoblade shrugs, glancing back at Tommy. “Come on.” He urges.

Tommy follows. “Was he a good friend?”

“He was a very good friend.” Techno says. “But he was my last friend, and now I’m just on my own.”

“Okay, well, I’m going to be your next friend.”

Techno snorts. “No.”

“We’re friends now.”

“No, we’re not.” Technoblade looks down at Tommy. “You don’t even know anything about me.”

“I know your name is Technoblade.” Tommy protests, crossing his arms and lifting his chin with confidence.

“Okay...” Techno trails off, silently asking him to go on.

“And you kill zombies!” Tommy nods. “That’s two things.”

“What if I don’t kill zombies, though?” Technoblade grins. “I’ve never killed a zombie in my life.” He lies, and Tommy’s face scrunches up.

“Okay, well then, you’re just a coward-”

“Hey-!”

“And I can kill the zombies for you!” Tommy nods, raising his arms out. “Because we are very good friends.”

“No, we’re not.” Technoblade rolls his eyes. “But thank you anyway.”

“We’re gonna have to be good friends if I’m going to be staying here.” Tommy says, looking around the street. “You better not be like, secretly evil.”

“I’m not.” Technoblade deadpans. “And you’re not staying.”

“Yeah I am.”

“No, you’re going back with your group.” Technoblade says. “And you’re getting out of my territory.”

Techno doesn’t get a response, Tommy giving a tiny glare at the back of his head. Then there’s the sound of footsteps rapidly going away from him, and Techno turns around to find the kid running down the street, in the opposite direction of Technoblade.

“No you don’t-” Techno mutters under his breath, not at all wanting a child to be running around in his streets.

Tommy screams loudly as Technoblade easily gains on him, reaching down and grabbing the kid off the ground. He’s careful to not get kicked in the gut with those swinging legs, and he puts Tommy over his shoulder, quickly turning around and walking down the street. Floof is

sitting where Technoblade had been before Tommy had tried to sprint away, being no help at all.

“Put me down! Bitch! Fucker! Asshole!” Tommy screams, squirming and trying his best to be let go. Technoblade ignores the way Tommy is hitting at his back with little fists. “Oh, you’re stupid! Dumb! You’re a terrible friend! Your mask isn’t even scary, and your hair is pink!”

“I happen to like the pink.” Technoblade says. That wasn’t much of an insult, Techno likes his unusual hair color.

“I don’t, because it looks terrible, and you should put me down!”

Technoblade rolls his eyes. “No, because you’re going to run off again.”

“I’m not going back!” Tommy kicks and struggles once more. “Not going back, I’m not! You can’t make me!”

“Watch me.” Technoblade just has to hand the kid over to the group, easy-peasy. No amount of tears is going to make Techno change his mind. So what, if the kid wants to stay? So what, if the kid might’ve been taken away from his family? So what, if the group the kid is with made the poor decision to literally send a child into his territory, alone?

Technoblade pauses in his steps.

Tommy is still kicking, struggling an awful lot to no avail. “You said I could stay!”

“I said I’d think about it.” Techno responds, feeling unsure. He tries to walk forward again, he knows the walls aren’t that far off, but there’s something tugging at his chest, and it just doesn’t feel right to keep going just to hand the kid over. “You can’t just stay here.” He says slowly.

Although, Techno has plenty of space. He has plenty of food, plenty of resources. The kid is small, probably will add at least a bit of excitement to the passing time. The kid is waiting for his 'Wilby' isn't he? Maybe, Technoblade can just wait around for Wilbur to take the kid off his hands, rather than give the kid over to the group that clearly isn't caring for a child correctly. Not that Technoblade knows how to do any better, but he's fairly sure he's a much safer option-

What is he *thinking*?

"You're not staying here, you can't." Technoblade repeats, but it feels like he's saying it to himself, now.

"Why not?!" Tommy yells. "There isn't even anyone here! Just you and your mean dog. I can sleep in that building! Or that one. Or that one!" Tommy continues to point at the buildings they pass, and Technoblade feels a bit of frustration build up inside him.

He can't just keep a kid. Doesn't matter if the kid is in someone else's hands that aren't too trustworthy, Technoblade can't keep a kid. He's meant to be on his own, that's what the whole point is. This is his territory, his part of the city, no trespassers.

But the kid is small. Tommy is capable, clearly smarter than others, judging by the fact he immediately took cover when hurt, and has some teachings from 'Wilbur'. Technoblade could always have something new to give his attention to. It's not like anything else would come along, and he's been on his own for a long time. Sometimes, company other than his dog would be nice.

No.

No, and that's final.

He can't keep the kid.

And yet, Technoblade finds his traitorous mouth asking-

“What do you not like about the group that you’re in?” Techno asks, and Tommy seems to stop in his struggle.

“Everything.” He says, with a burning anger that’s almost impressive for a seven-year-old

“Specify.”

“Dream won’t believe me when I say Wilbur is alive. Everyone is always telling me to be quiet. I have to keep sleeping alone, because no one wants to sleep next to me! The food sucks. Dream is stupid. It’s boring whenever we travel. Sapnap won’t let me practice shooting with a gun-”

“Alright, alright.” Technoblade stops again in his steps, taking a deep breath and sighing. Already, Technoblade doesn’t agree with several of those things. Who knows, maybe Wilbur is alive. Underestimating kids and not believing them is a stupid move. Along with not training them. Tommy says ‘practice’, like he already knows how, so Techno has a feeling maybe Wilbur could’ve already taught the kid how to defend himself.

And overall, Tommy just seems to really not like Dream.

“Theoretically, if you were to stay with me-”

“So I can stay?!?”

“*Theoretically.*” Techno stresses. “And just until your brother comes here.”

“You’re such a cool friend.”

“Oh my god, we’re not friends.” Techno breathes out. “If you stay here, you have to listen to what I say. No running around on your own, and all that.”

Tommy hums. “Fine. But you have to promise to give me half your rations.”

Technoblade raises his eyebrows. “My rations?”

“I’m a growing boy.” Tommy says, like he’s reciting it from somewhere. “So I need food. You give me half your rations.”

Techno has a feeling that won’t be necessary, but he keeps quiet about the amount of food he has, and the fact he has a whole pot of soup in the kitchen right now, more than enough for him and Tommy.

“Fine. Deal.” Technoblade agrees. He adjusts the way he’s carrying Tommy, taking him down from his shoulder, Tommy screams a bit as he thinks he’s going to fall. The kid latches his arms around Techno’s neck, holding on for dear life. Technoblade just continues on his way, carrying Tommy with one arm, now. “Tell me where you got in, your group might still be near the wall you came in from.”

Tommy blinks, seeming to falter. “Wait, I really can stay?”

“Sure.” Technoblade glances down at Floof, who stays trotting by his side. “I have the space.”

Tommy points to the direction of where he came from, and Technoblade walks towards there.

“Stay here with Floof.” Technoblade says as they get near the wall, already hearing raised voices from the other side. Floof sits down with a quiet growl, and he sets Tommy down next to the dog, before setting off towards the barrier.

“-I fucking told you it was a bad idea! No, you insisted-”

“I didn’t insist! The kid put words in my mouth, I didn’t promise anything about Wilbur! And he went through the gap before I could even say ‘no, don’t do that’!”

“Really now? Because, from what I remember-”

Technoblade climbs onto an old broken down car, letting him look over the barrier wall and down at the heads of three people, two of them arguing, one of them looking off into the distance, seemingly keeping watch.

“Hey.” Technoblade says, and he watches as all three of them snap their heads up at him.
“Who here is named Dream?”

They all blink at him, and already there’s a gun pointed his way. “What the fuck?!”

“Put the gun down.” Technoblade deadpans, slouching down a bit and stepping back to stay out of range. He reaches for his own gun at his side. “Who’s Dream?”

“That’s me.” Dream raises his hand, a face mask over his mouth and nose. He forces Sapnap to lower his gun. “Where’s Tommy?”

“Is the Tommy we’re talking about a seven-year-old with blond hair, a blue jacket that has seen better days, and wearing really dirty shoes?” He glances back at Tommy, who seems to be patting Floof on the head, looking up nervously at Technoblade.

“Yes.” Dream stresses. “Look, we just wanted him to look inside, can you tell him to come back? Please?” Dream asks, and he sounds worried.

Technoblade hums. “He says you took him away from Wilbur.”

“Just tell him to come back over-”

“I want to know about Wilbur.” Technoblade insists. Dream’s eyes squint up towards Techno, a bit conflicted, and Sapnap crosses his arms, turning away. George just stays silent, leveling Techno with an almost bored look, nearly judgmental.

“Wilbur is the kid’s older brother. We lost him in a zombie hoard a few weeks back, he’s dead. Tommy’s still clinging to the idea that he’s alive, but we weren’t able to find him after we ran from the horde.”

“You didn’t search for him?”

“He didn’t show up. I doubt he made it out.” Dream says. “We’ve been trying to take care of Tommy ever since.”

“And you’re doing a *great* job of that.” Technoblade scoffs, stepping closer to the barrier, squinting down at the three of them. “The kid hates you. You’re hardly doing well on taking care of him, even though there are three of you-”

“It’s the fucking zombie apocalypse-!” Sapnap protests.

“-and you sent him into *my* territory, on his own. He’s seven. *Seven* years old, and you sent him in here?” Technoblade nearly hisses, quiet anger underneath his voice. Technoblade isn’t good with kids, but he knows for a fact that youth, in this world, should be raised well.

“Look, it’s really not your problem. The kid is ours, we’re doing what we can. Just give him over, and we’ll turn around and leave.” Dream tries to say, lifting his hands up.

“Fuck you!” Tommy yells, and Technoblade looks below him, finding that Tommy’s gotten up and close to the barrier, peeking through a hole. “You left Wil behind, you liar!”

“Tommy.” Technoblade says, Tommy looking up at him with wide eyes. “Didn’t I say to stay with-”

“Wilbur’s dead, Tommy.” Dream says almost gently, and Tommy goes to scream again, only for Technoblade to cut him off.

“Here’s the deal.” Technoblade says. “You’re not doing very well at this ‘taking care of the seven year old’ thing, so, I’m keeping him. He stays with me.”

Dream looks at him with a baffled face, Sapnap seeming even more perplexed. George, once again, just looks kinda bored. And confused.

“No, he’s not.” Dream protests.

“Nah, he is.” Technoblade shrugs. “He’s staying here. If you want him back, bring Wilbur here. I’ll be keeping the kid meanwhile.”

“That’s not happening!”

“It’s happening.” Technoblade grins from behind his mask. “Unless you want to try and take him back? Then in that case, go ahead, try. Try it. But I’ll tell you, it’s just me back here.”

“Isn’t that a good thing for us?” George asks, glancing at Sapnap.

“It’s just me back here, and it has been only me for a few months now. Those walls made of zombies? I did that. All of it.”

George’s eyes go wide, and he walks towards Dream, grabs him by the arm to whisper quietly into his ear. Technoblade can’t make out what he’s saying, but George has remembered rumors he’s heard.

And he’s also realized they just stumbled upon something they really shouldn’t have stumbled upon.

“No, you’re lying.” Sapnap accuses. “There’s got to be a group behind there.”

“Nope, it’s just me.”

“Seriously?” Sapnap asks, sounding just baffled.

“What’s your name?” Dream asks, nearly frantic. “I- What’s your name?”

Techno raises his eyebrows, huffing.

“Technoblade!” Tommy answers for him, and all three of them go still. “His name is Technoblade and he’s better than youuu!”

Chapter End Notes

tbh Dream isn't really the villain here, he's just very bad at parenting. (He does truly think Wilbur is dead, and that Tommy is just in denial) Really, all of the Dream team is bad at parenting.

Alternate title for this chapter: Custody battle in a zombie apocalypse

Also Wilbur isn't dead. I'll probably get some Wilbur content in for the next chapter. Anyway, thanks for reading. I'm tired, whoop.

"Surely this kid won't be around forever" he said. "This is just a temporary thing" he said. Twas a LIE

Chapter Notes

god the zombie AU brainrot has me by the NECK

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Dream's face looks a little pale from behind that mask, and Technoblade feels a hint of amusement.

"Listen-" Dream raises his hands up, almost in surrender. "Listen, just give Tommy over, and we'll be out of your hair. You'll never see us again, you won't have to worry about it, you can just keep living your own life undisturbed, I swear."

"I'm not going with you!" Tommy protests before Technoblade can even respond, stomping his foot against the ground as he leans in towards the wall, squinting through the little hole. "I'm staying here!"

"Tommy, not now." Dream grits out, Sapnap crouching down a bit to try and see Tommy through the little gap.

"When Wil comes for me, you're going to look so stupid." Tommy remarks, Dream narrowing his eyes towards Tommy's direction.

"Tommy." George speaks up, voice stern. "I know you miss him-"

"He's not dead!" Tommy cuts him off.

“-that zombie horde was a death sentence.”

“He got away from the zombies, you idiot! He’s alive!” Tommy slams his fists against the wall, pure rage in his voice. “He’s alive, you’re lying! You’re a lying bitch who lies!”

Dream sighs a bit and looks back up at Techno. “Look, we can bargain for the kid. I doubt you want another mouth to feed? Just- give him back, we’ll leave right now, no hard feelings.”

Techno snorts. “There’s nothing that you can possibly have that I want. And believe me, while his personality is-” Technoblade glances down at Tommy, who stares back up at him with a deep frown. “...charming, it’s really not that hard for me to take him off your hands. I’ll manage. You won’t.”

“You can’t just take him away from us.” Dream insists. “We’ve been watching over him ever since his brother died, we’re trying our best-”

Sapnap grabs Dream by the arm, making him falter in his words.

“Question. You’ve cleared out that entire area behind you by yourself, right?” Sapnap asks, raising his eyebrows.

“Yup.” Techno nods.

“Then you must have supplies to spare.”

Technoblade tilts his head. “...I do.”

Dream yanks Sapnap by the back of the shirt. “Are you seriously considering trading the kid for *resources*-?” He whispers harshly, Sapnap slapping away Dream’s hand.

“Dude, the kid isn’t even ours- let him have him!” Sapnap says quietly back, George walking up beside Dream. “Maybe it would actually help us get by.”

“We’ve been running low on food and water ever since last week.” George notes, Dream giving a burning glare. George doesn’t really falter though, instead poking at Dream’s backpack. “Look, I know you don’t like it, but consider the options. The kid is taken off our hands, and we could be given a chance to get farther. One less mouth to feed.”

“I’m not *trading* him.” Dream hisses. “We’re supposed to be taking care of him.”

“We hardly even knew Wilbur.” George reminds. “The kid isn’t our responsibility, and he could be better off here. Safer for him, even.”

“Dream.” Sapnap stresses. “Come on, man.”

They all look up at Technoblade, who stares down at them with a bored expression.

“Let’s say we let you keep the kid.” Sapnap speaks up, waving a hand up. “What could we get in return, since you apparently have some food and water to spare?”

Technoblade hums.

He holds up three fingers. “I’ll give a bag for each of you, filled with food and water, enough to last you for a while. But,” Techno glances down at his feet, finding Tommy trying to climb onto the car Techno is standing on. He’s not getting too far, but he’s trying. “-you have to search for Wilbur. You bring Wilbur here, I’ll give you three more bags, and you can be on your way.”

George seems to consider it, thinking it over in his head, while Sapnap just nods right away. Dream stares at the ground with a conflicted face.

“We can’t just do this.” Dream says quietly, Sapnap smiling sadly. He tugs at Dream’s sleeve.

“The kid will be fine.” Sapnap reassures, and Technoblade takes that moment to speak up again.

“Oh, and also, because I know at least one of you must be considering it. Any of you try to break into my territory, I’ll kill you.” Technoblade smiles behind his mask, eyes crinkling up. “Don’t think I won’t. I’ve kept this area empty for a long while, and I plan on keeping it that way.”

“Noted.” Dream says dryly, huffing.

“See?” Sapnap murmurs under his breath. “The kid will be okay.”

“Yeah, now he’s just going to live with...The *Blood* God.” George mumbles back, leaning in close towards Dream. “Uhm, I’m sure that he’ll be alright.”

“You’re both not helping.” Dream mutters. “Fine.” He says louder, up at Technoblade. “Fine, we’ll go look for Wilbur.”

“Great.” Technoblade nods, and Dream notices just the smallest bit of blond hair at the edge of the wall, Tommy trying to jump up and look over. “I’ll go get your bags then, you wait here.”

“How do we know you’re not going to just leave us out here without anything?” George asks, raising a hand.

“Good point.” Techno hums. “I’m not going to do that, though.” He gives as a response, and he goes to climb off the car, disappearing from view. Dream hears him call Tommy, and

there's the sound of two people landing on their feet, then walking away.

All they can do then is wait.

"Do we *have* to give them stuff?" Tommy asks, trailing behind Technoblade, who walks slowly, keeping an eye on Floof, who's decided to stay trotting next to Tommy, rather than him. "I think you could just tell them to go away. Use your intimidation." Tommy lifts his arms up and poses like he's showing off his muscles. Techno snorts.

"I could intimidate them, yeah." Technoblade comments. "But if I send them off with supplies, they'll go look for your brother for us, and I can just sit here, not having to do anything other than make sure you don't die."

"I never die." Tommy huffs, raising his chin up high.

Technoblade hums. How many times has he told himself that, he wonders. It's a good motto, one that Techno has held close for a long time. He likes to think it's part of the reason why he's gotten this far.

"What, are you too cool to die?" Technoblade asks, holding back the urge to scoff when Tommy nods right away, not realizing Techno is just teasing.

"I'm not a coward, like other people. I survive!" Tommy lifts his hands up into the air, hands curled into fists. "Wilby says I'm like a cockroach."

"Small and annoying?" Technoblade says, looking back at Tommy, who's face scrunches up in anger.

“No! Hard to kill.” Tommy thinks for a moment. “I get grabbed by zombies a lot. I’ve never gotten bitten though, so that’s good. But it’s always gross when they grab me and be all *dead* in my face.”

Technoblade frowns a bit at that new bit of info. “When’s the last time you got grabbed?”

“Uhh, a few days ago. There was a zombie that grabbed the back of my jacket.” Tommy pulls at his hood, seeming to remember the moment. “Sapnap shot it, though. Dream told me I had to walk next to him, after that.” He mutters, not seeming too overjoyed with that predicament. “Do I have to walk next to you?” He asks, a bit sarcastic.

Tommy looks around at the streets around them as Technoblade huffs. “No, I think you’ll be fine. There’s not a lot of zombies around here.”

“Where’d they go?” Tommy asks, turning around and looking behind him, staring at the road underneath his shoes, then looking up at the abandoned buildings all around. “Do they stay in the buildings until night?” He asks, giving a wary look to the doors and windows, as if he’ll spot an undead creature looking back at him.

Technoblade glances at the buildings too, but he knows there won’t be anything to find. “Remember that wall of dead zombies you saw?”

Tommy stops in his steps, blinking at Technoblade. Techno stops as well, turning around to face Tommy.

“...but, where’s the other zombies?” Tommy asks.

“There are no other zombies.” Technoblade shrugs with one shoulder. “I killed them all. There’s no more zombies here.”

“There’s probably a few.” Tommy runs up, Floof following at his heels, and Technoblade watches as Tommy slows down at Techno’s side, staying close to him. “You probably just

didn't find them."

"Nope." Technoblade continues to walk, Tommy matching his pace. "They're all gone. I mostly just focus on projects rather than surviving, these days."

"What projects?" Tommy asks, looking up at him.

Technoblade ignores his question in favor of pointing ahead. "There's the base." He says, Tommy looking at where Techno is pointing with curious eyes. "That building is where I keep a bunch of stuff, and that building is where I live. Gotta get the stuff for your group first."

"They're not my group." Tommy mutters, the two of them walking up to the buildings.

The storagehouse is still locked up tight as they approach, and Techno digs through his pockets for his usual set of keys, unlocking the chains.

"What's in there?" Tommy asks, having taken several steps back, wary of what Technoblade might be keeping behind locked doors. "Is that where the zombies are?"

Technoblade scoffs. "No. This is where I keep extra supplies." He pulls open the doors, walking inside, Floof following after him. Tommy stays outside, lingers by the doorway as he watches Techno stride in.

Techno works on grabbing three duffel bags, quickly stocking them with water and cans of food, not bothering to make it neat and tidy. He honestly just throws the supplies in there, zipping it up quickly and throwing the first duffel bag to the side. It's not completely full, and if Technoblade wanted to, he could pack it properly and make sure there's the maximum amount of supplies inside to last, but he's not going to put in the effort.

Tommy slowly walks inside the building, eyes wide at the rows and rows of shelves and boxes and cans, all things that Techno has stockpiled up after going through his little portion

of the city. He pokes at a can of peaches, making a face when his finger comes away with a bit of dust.

“There’s so much stuff in here.” Tommy says, looking around once more.

“Yup.” Technoblade zips up the second bag, and throws it to the side. He wants to be done with this quickly. The sooner those three are away from his barriers, the better. “It’s my storagehouse. I keep everything I don’t really need in here.”

“All of this is yours?” Tommy asks, picking up a box of pancake mix. He shakes it a bit, making a face at the logo that stares back at him.

“All of it.” Technoblade nods. He pauses. “Hey, could you get something for me?” He asks, slowing in his haste of throwing supplies into the bag.

Tommy lowers the box, looking at Technoblade past the shelves. Techno points a hand towards Tommy’s left. “There should be first-aid stuff over there. Medicine, bandages, things like that. Go grab band-aids for me.”

Putting the box down, Tommy shrugs and listens to his order, walking over aimlessly and searching around in the organized mess of supplies. He finds a shelf that’s stocked with medical things, and he grabs a little box off the shelf. Band-aids. Colorful ones, at that.

He walks back to Technoblade, Floof trotting up to him and brushing against his legs as Technoblade zips up the last bag.

“Wait, wait, I got it.” Tommy waves the box, hand reached out towards the bag, only for Technoblade to throw it to the side with the others. “Hey!”

“Let me see.” Technoblade stays kneeling on the ground, holding a hand out towards Tommy. Tommy just lifts the box out of his reach, frowning. “They’re for you, not Dream.” He says, pointing to Tommy’s leg.

Tommy looks down, a flash of surprise crossing his face, as he seemed to have forgotten about the fact his leg is a mess of blood and healing scabs. He had assumed the box of band-aids were going to go in the bags as well, but apparently not. Techno stands up, pulls the box out of Tommy's hands, and goes to grab a water bottle off a nearby shelf.

"I can do it." Tommy reaches for the band-aids, only for Techno to lift it out of his reach. Tommy makes an unhappy face. "Give it!" He jumps, only for Techno to lift it higher.

"Here, come sit down." Technoblade nods his head to one of the boxes to the side.

"I can do it!"

"You need to wash your leg off first." Technoblade says, giving the water bottle to Tommy's outstretched hands. "I can get a towel or something-" Techno goes to say, only for Tommy to immediately open the bottle and pour the contents onto his leg. "Or you could do that, sure."

"I said I got it." Tommy says stubbornly, raising his leg up, pouring water and rubbing off dirt and dried blood.

Technoblade huffs, putting the band-aids on a box beside him. "Sit down." He knocks his fist against the box.

"My shoe is wet." Tommy mutters, shaking his foot to try and get the water off.

"Wonder why." Technoblade says dryly. "Come on."

"I'm going, I'm going." Tommy struggles a bit to close the bottle of water, then goes over to Technoblade, who helps him sit on top of the box. Tommy almost immediately leans forward to look at his leg and see if it's still bleeding, and Technoblade picks at the box of bandages, pulling out a handful.

“Alright, pick a color.” Technoblade says, holding up four different band-aids.

Tommy picks out a red one. “You can have this one.” He says, plucking out of Techno’s grip and holding it in front of his face.

Techno raises an eyebrow. “I’m not the one with a bleeding knee.”

“Nope, but I did bite you earlier.” Tommy nods, and Technoblade glances at his hand, being reminded of that. There’s a slight red mark, but he really doesn’t need a band-aid. Then again, maybe if he agrees, the kid won’t put up a fuss with Techno trying to put bandages on his leg.

“Hand, please.” Tommy asks, lifting his chin with confidence. Techno holds back the urge to snort and instead just holds his hand out, Tommy picking at the band-aid for a solid ten seconds before peeling away the part covering the adhesive. Then he sticks it onto the side of Technoblade’s hand, looking rather satisfied with himself.

“Thanks.” Technoblade says. Tommy nods with a smile, and Technoblade just puts the other three band-aids down beside Tommy on the box he’s sitting on. He kneels down in front of the kid, checking over his leg, and a bit relieved to find that he’s just scratched up, no zombie bites to be found. It was unlikely, but not entirely impossible. “How did you even fall?” Techno asks, putting two band-aids on Tommy’s leg, one yellow, and the other a bright green.

“I tripped.” Tommy deadpans. Technoblade can’t help but snort a little at his tone. “Hey, don’t laugh!”

“I’m not laughing.” Technoblade lies, smoothing out the band-aid on Tommy’s knee before standing back up. “I’m just surprised you bled so much after tripping.”

“I fell on the curb.” Tommy shrugs, lifting his leg up and nearly kicking Technoblade. He looks at the band-aids placed on his leg, and deems them good enough, scooting off the box and landing on his feet. “Hey.” He says, poking at Techno’s hip.

“What?” Technoblade asks, pocketing the last band-aid, and taking the box, walking back over to where it’s meant to be. Tommy follows at his heels, Floof at Tommy’s heels.

“What’s under your mask?”

Technoblade pauses. “My face?”

“Can I see?” Tommy asks, and ah, there’s the real motive. Technoblade continues walking, putting the box of band-aids back on the shelf beside the medical supplies. “I want to see.”

“Maybe *after* Dream and his friends have left.” Technoblade says, patting Tommy on the head and walking past him, back over to where he’s left the duffel bags.

Honestly, Technoblade hadn’t entirely considered the fact the kid would see his face. It’s not that he’s uncomfortable with it, it’s just-

No one’s seen his face in literal months. He always wears the mask when he’s out walking around his streets, just in case he comes across someone and he needs to scare them off. The only time he doesn’t wear it is when he’s at home, gardening or cooking, or doing something else inside. And he’s been alone this whole time.

A quiet part of Technoblade is just a tad self conscious about the scar that’s placed across his nose, but that part is easy to ignore. He doubts the kid would care. Obviously, he’s got bigger things to worry about, like ‘Wilby’.

Technoblade leans down to where he’s thrown the duffel bags, and he swings one over his shoulder, and holds the other out to Tommy. “Can you carry this?” He asks, and Tommy’s eyes light up with determination.

“I can carry two.” Tommy insists, hands reaching out for the bag. The moment the weight is given to him though, he nearly stumbles, and his face falls into a slight panic.

“Uh-huh.” Techno grins, picking up the third bag. “Don’t fall.”

“I’ve got it!” Tommy yells, wrapping his arms around the bag, grunting a bit with its weight. The kid is most definitely going to drop it at one point, but Technoblade really doesn’t mind. If anything, it’s kinda funny to watch. “I’m strong, I got this.”

“Very strong.” Technoblade agrees. He turns on his heel and goes towards the front door. “Come on. Let’s go drop these off, then.”

“Oh, we’ve got to walk the whole way?!” Tommy whines, following after Technoblade and Floof, trying to not drop the bag.

Technoblade drops his bags onto the ground outside, searches for his key so he can lock up the storagehouse again. Tommy stays carrying his bag, an angry yet determined expression on his face.

“If you can’t carry it, I’ve got it.” Technoblade says, pulling at the chains and turning the key, hearing a quiet click. He pulls at the lock to make sure it won’t budge, then puts his key away, leaning down once more to pick up the bags.

“No, no! I’ve got this! I’m strong, I’m a very strong man.” Tommy nods. “Let’s go!”

“Alright.” Techno drawls, watching Tommy try running down the street.

The kid trips and lands right on his face.

They arrive back at the barrier without much more trouble. Techno's used the last band-aid in his pocket, a light pink one that's now put onto the side of Tommy's jaw. The color stands out on his face, and it's a stark contrast to the way the kid almost looks furious. He's nearly strangling the bag with how tightly he's holding onto it, and he walks as if he's on a mission, marching across the street.

Technoblade throws a bag onto the roof of the car by the wall, and climbs on with the other bag in his hand. He glances down over the edge, and finds the three strangers from before still there. Two of them are sitting down against the wall, one is standing on his feet, looking out into the distance.

He drops a bag down with no warning. They all jolt, one of them even giving a high-pitched scream, and Technoblade scoffs quietly, reaching down and grabbing the second bag, throwing it over as well. Tommy hands him the third one, and Technoblade watches it land with the other two, Dream, George, and Sapnap all looking up at Techno now.

"There's your supplies." Technoblade says, tilting his head to the side. "You can go now."

Dream rushes forward to unzip the bags, looking through each one, and both Sapnap and George seem a mix of satisfied and surprised at the amount of stuff inside.

"Holy shit, this could last us a while if we ration it." Sapnap mutters, George poking through the cans.

Dream looks up from where he's crouching down by the bags. "And Tommy?" He asks, voice worried.

"I'm still here." Tommy calls, trying to climb onto the car that Techno is standing on. Technoblade decides to pity the kid, helping him up, and picking him up, carrying him so he can actually see over the wall.

“He’s still staying with me.” Technoblade says, nodding to the bags on the ground. “I’ll give you three more bags of supplies if you can find his brother and bring him here.”

“Six bags.” Sapnap bargains.

“Three.”

“Five.”

“I’ll bargain with you when Wilbur gets here.” Technoblade says, not in the mood to stick around any longer than he has to. “You can go.”

George zips the bags back up, Sapnap taking two and carrying them on his shoulders. Dream picks up the third one by the handles, still looking up at Techno and Tommy with a conflicted face.

“Tommy, are you sure you want to stay?” Dream asks.

“Come on, Dream.” Sapnap says gently, him and George waiting for Dream to turn around and lead the way back to where they came from.

“I’m staying here!” Tommy yells, a smug little smile on his face. “And you can leave and never come back!”

“Bye.” Technoblade waves a hand, and Tommy copies him, waving his hand as well.

Dream still hesitates for a moment, looking down at the bag he’s holding, then shaking his head. “Goodbye, Tommy.” He says, and he turns around without waiting for a response. George and Sapnap follow beside him as they start to walk off.

Tommy and Techno watch them go for a solid minute, Technoblade just wanting to make sure they actually leave.

“Bye, Dream.” Tommy mutters, and for once, he doesn’t sound all that spiteful.

Technoblade climbs down and walks with Tommy back towards his base.

“Floof, Floof.” Tommy says, trying to grab the attention of the dog at Techno’s side. “Floof. Hey! Floof!”

The dog hardly pays attention to the kid, occasionally looking up at Techno as if asking ‘you seeing this?’ Technoblade personally finds it hilarious, and he continues to watch at Tommy fails at getting the dog to even look his way.

“Floof! Hey! I know you can hear me!” Tommy nudges the dog in the side, not even getting anything. Techno walks a bit faster, and Floof keeps at his pace with ease. Tommy has to scramble to catch up.

“Technoblade, your dog is defective.” Tommy complains, sighing loudly. “Floof! Floof, Floof, Floof- that doesn’t sound like a word anymore.”

“Yeah, ‘cause you’ve been repeating it the whole way back.” Technoblade says, Tommy groaning. “What are you even trying to do?”

“I want him to follow *me*.” Tommy says, walking up behind Techno and grabbing at the back of the shirt. “And stop walking so fast, my leg hurts.”

Technoblade stops in his tracks, Tommy practically running into him.

“I didn’t say *stop* walking.” Tommy mutters, taking a step back. Techno turns back towards him.

“Do you want to sit down for a bit?” Techno asks, glancing towards the sidewalk. It’s not like he has anything to really do. He can stand to let Tommy just sit for a minute or two, since they’ve been traveling across his territory back and forth.

“No.” Tommy kicks at a rock on the road. “I can walk, I’ll just sit down when we get back to your storage thing.”

Technoblade huffs. “I don’t live in the storagehouse, I live in an apartment.” He kneels down. “Here, come on.” He says, holding his arms out.

Tommy grabs onto him, Techno lifting him off the ground and continuing his way. “Don’t get used to this.” The walk is just a few minutes more, Technoblade will be nice, just for today, since the kid oughta get settled in. (And honestly, Techno needs to settle in with having another human being around him.)

“No, I’m definitely getting used to this.” Tommy hums, seeming very pleased with himself, swinging his legs just the smallest bit. “Wilby used to carry me sometimes when we walked a lot. But he’d carry me on his shoulders.”

“Did you two travel often?” Technoblade asks, turning the corner, walking through the middle of the road.

“Sometimes. He was trying to find a good town, that’s why we were with Dream and the others. We were all looking for a safe town.” Tommy looks around at the street they’re walking through. “But we got caught in a zombie hoard. I lost Wilba, and Dream made us run instead of going back for him. They all kept saying he died, but I saw him climb up these stairs before we started to run. He probably got away, and I wanted to go look for him, but they kept saying no.”

Technoblade wonders how they must've had to drag the kid in order to get him to follow. Tommy was already stubborn with getting out from underneath that shelf earlier, he can't imagine the kid while being taken away from his brother.

"You think he's looking for you?" Techno asks.

"Of course he is!" Tommy exclaims. "I know he is. We just have to wait, now. He'll find me." Tommy says it with so much confidence, so much steady assurance that Technoblade finds himself nodding along. The kid doesn't see any other option other than being reunited with Wil. He's stubborn, but that might be a good thing, with this.

Techno's wonders how long Wilbur is going to take to get here, though. It could be just a few weeks, or maybe a few months. Traveling in this world can be unpredictable, and for all he knows, Wilbur might die on the way here. Or he might bring a group along with him, and Techno really doesn't like the idea of inviting a group inside his home.

A problem for the future. Right now, Techno's only main priority is to keep the kid alive and safe, and that should be easy enough. Even right now, with the kid in Techno's arms, Technoblade feels confident in his abilities to keep any threats away.

An army of zombies was nothing, and the occasional threat of hostile humans isn't much either. Technoblade is capable, he knows that much. Although, raising a kid? Maybe that'll take some work.

Tommy continues to ramble a bit about Wil, talking about how Wilbur always hugged him when it got cold, and how Wilbur could make bird noises with his hands, and how Wilbur knows how to catch fish, he did it once when they were by a river. Wilbur this, Wilbur that, the name rings in Techno's head, and Tommy can't seem to keep quiet about his brother. It's a bit endearing, to be honest. Technoblade doesn't mind listening, even if it might've been annoying to someone else, Techno hasn't heard another voice in a long while. He listens, and Tommy talks.

"We're here." Technoblade says, as Tommy is about to talk about how 'Wilbah' can play the guitar, but he broke his last guitar on the first day of the outbreak by using it as a weapon against a zombie that grabbed Tommy.

Tommy lifts his head up at the apartment, Technoblade continuing on his way, making his way inside with a beeline straight to the door. Floof runs ahead of him, already knowing that they're going home now, and so the dog runs up the stairs to the upper floor where Techno's apartment is.

"Floof!" Tommy yells, cupping his hands around his mouth. "Hey!"

"He's just running ahead. Probably wants food or something." Technoblade reassures, climbing up the stairs with a heavy sigh. "Are you hungry?"

Tommy gives a vague noise. "Kinda."

"I have soup on the stove, but if you don't want that, I probably have some snacks laying around somewhere in the pantry." Techno says, reaching to the end of the stairway, Floof waiting by the door so he can run into the hallway. Technoblade opens the door, and watches the dog squeeze through, zipping past the other doors on the floor.

Techno puts Tommy down on the floor, and motions for him to follow after the dog that's currently running up and down the hall, skidding to a stop in front of a door that Technoblade knows very well by now. Tommy giggles a bit at the way the dog seems to hyper, tail wagging frantically as it waits for Techno to open the door so it can go inside.

"Geez, calm down, Floof." Techno mutters with a small grin, opening the door and watching the dog disappear inside. He pushes the door open and lets Tommy walk in first, before following and closing it behind him. "Take off your shoes." Techno says, tugging at his own boots so he can take them off. He keeps the floors clean, and he would like them to stay that way.

Tommy doesn't really make a move to kick off his dirty shoes though, and he instead blinks and stares at the apartment, leaning forward and seeing the kitchen, pristine and neat. Techno nudges Tommy gently in the shoulder, and Tommy sits down on the floor, pulling at his shoelaces.

Techno walks past him, yawning a bit and stretching his arms up as he goes through the kitchen in the living room. Floof is running around in circles in the living room, clearly lost in a rush of energy. The dog jumps onto the couch, jumps off, runs around the couch twice, then jumps onto the couch once more, looking at Techno expectantly.

“Off the couch, Floof.” Technoblade says, leaning down and picking up a brightly colored ball that’s half chewed to death, and he then throws it down the hall that leads to the bedroom and the bathroom. Floof practically leaps off the cushions to go chase after it.

Tommy’s finally gotten his shoes off, and he walks slowly through the kitchen, eyeing the pot on the stove and the empty table. He stands at the doorway, watching as Floof runs back to Techno, almost throwing the ball back at Techno’s feet, the ball hitting Techno’s ankles.

“Wanna throw it?” Techno asks, picking up the ball, Floof turning around with his eyes on the ball only, ready to chase after it.

Tommy nods, running up and reaching his hand to Techno, Techno giving it to him and stepping back as Tommy throws the ball towards the hallway, Floof zipping off to catch it. Tommy laughs a bit at seeing Floof nearly run into a wall while trying to grab the bouncing ball.

Technoblade smiles a bit, pulling at his mask and taking it off, sighing a bit and placing the thing on the armrest of the couch. Tommy looks towards him with Techno moving to put something down, and when Technoblade looks at him, he lets out a big gasp.

“You have a cut on your nose!” Tommy yells, pointing a finger at Techno’s face.

“It’s a scar.” Techno deadpans. “It’s already healed.”

“That looks bad.” Tommy says, no filter at all. “And cool! And cool.” He tries to add, nodding frantically.

“Uh-huh.” Techno nods. “Thanks.” He says dryly.

“Hey, I think it does look cool. You are not ugly.” Tommy says, like that’s a grand compliment. Technoblade doesn’t exactly feel flattered.

“Okay, house tour.” Techno announces, clapping his hands together, walking off into the kitchen. Tommy watches him walk off, then follows after him.

Technoblade waves at the general direction of the kitchen. “Kitchen. Don’t touch the stove. Don’t touch the knives. If you want something to eat, you can just ask me, or you can look in here.” Techno opens up one of the cabinets, pushing around snacks. Tommy’s eyes go wide, and he seems almost in awe at the fact Techno has a stocked pantry.

Techno moves on to the living room, walking past Tommy, who turns around and follows at his heels. “Living room, don’t touch the weapons. I’ll tell you when you can practice shooting.” He goes into the hallway, towards the bedroom, past the bathroom. “Over here is where I sleep, although, I’m not sure how I’m going to get another-”

“Bed!” Tommy yells, pushing past Techno and climbing onto his bed, flopping down in the blankets and pillows. He practically rolls around in the sheets, glad to have something comfy to sleep on for once, and with the way he’s smiling, Technoblade just tells himself that he can just sleep on the couch until he figures something out. The kid probably appreciates the bed more than him, at the moment.

Tommy sits up, hands looking through the pillows, and his eyes go wide when he realizes Technoblade has little animal plushies as well. “You have a cow!” Tommy yells, Techno walking forward and sitting down beside him. Tommy raises the cow plushie towards Techno, as if Techno hasn’t been sleeping with that plushie practically every night for the past several months.

“Yeah.” Techno nods, and Tommy nearly squeals. He hugs the thing close to his chest, his dirty sleeves pressing against the fabric of the plush, and Techno makes a bit of a face. He’s glad the kid likes the cow, but he’s less happy over the state of the kid’s coat.

“This needs a wash.” Techno mutters, pulling at the sleeve of Tommy’s jacket, which is a faded blue that’s stained with dirt, mud, and blood, probably. Tommy hardly acknowledges Techno’s comment, he just pulls off the jacket and throws it in his direction, more focused on the cow in his hands.

He’s practically beaming with the plushie in his grip, and there’s a determined look on his face as if he’s decided that he will die for that little cow. He mutters words towards it, obviously having a conversation that excludes Techno.

Techno huffs, standing up from the bed and taking Tommy’s coat, wondering if he could salvage it. For the time being, the kid will need new clothes, and Techno knows nothing of his is going to fit Tommy. He checks his closet anyway, and hums at seeing a few jackets he owns, but hasn’t been wearing that much these days.

There’s a pink jacket that’s a bit worn, something Techno hasn’t been wearing that often, mostly because it didn’t really fit. It’ll still be loose on Tommy, but it’s the best for now. They can go look for better clothes after dinner.

He pulls it off the hanger, putting Tommy’s blue coat to the side, and turning back around to Tommy, who’s still grinning wide at the cow in his hands, overjoyed.

“Tommy.” Techno says, and Tommy looks up, Technoblade throwing the jacket over to him. “You can wear that for now. I know there’s stores nearby that probably have better clothes, but you can have that rather than this thing.” He gestures at Tommy’s dirtied jacket.

Tommy blinks a bit, pulling the jacket towards him and putting the cow down, pulling his arms through the sleeves.

“This doesn’t fit.” Tommy comments, seeing how it hangs loose on him. Techno walks forward, reaching past Tommy’s ear, then yanking the hood over his eyes. “Ah!”

Techno laughs.

The day goes by rather quickly with Techno staying busy. They eat soup for dinner, Tommy being glad to have all the food he can eat, and also refusing to let go of the cow plushie. He carries it with him out of the apartment, Technoblade not being able to say no, because when he tries to suggest it, Tommy looks at him with a face that promises tears in the near future.

And Techno does not know how to deal with a crying child.

The cow plushie goes along with them for their search for new clothes. The store isn't that far, just down the street, and both Floof and Tommy run the whole way. Techno's jacket flies behind Tommy like a cape, with how it doesn't fit. Techno just watches Tommy try and race Floof, not bothering to run after them. He doesn't like to run much anyway, not with his leg being the way that it is.

The clothes in the store are a bit dusty, but still usable, and Techno and Tommy search around for a good pile of clothes that would fit Tommy. Tommy picks out a shirt that's already similar to the one he's wearing, white with red sleeves, and he gives a fierce glare towards Techno as he grabs it off the rack, as if daring Techno to say anything against it. Techno just shrugs and tells Tommy to put it in the duffel bag they've brought along.

Tommy picks out shorts, pants, a pair of comfy pajamas that don't fit all that well, but are the closest size in the store. Along with that, Techno is able to coax Tommy into getting a new pair of shoes, ones that aren't so beat up and worn. It takes them a solid hour, Tommy being rather picky as he holds his cow in one hand and Techno's sleeve in the other, kicking off any new shoes that he doesn't like. They do eventually find a pair that Tommy deems good enough, but they've made a mess of the shoe aisle.

Well, it was already a mess, honestly, with the dried bloodstains on the ground.

Strangely, Tommy refuses to pick out any new jackets, instead sticks with the one Techno's given him. Techno won't complain, he's not going to use that jacket anytime soon anyway.

With that, they walk back to the apartment, Techno holding a duffel bag filled with new clothes for Tommy, and Tommy still holding his cow plushie in his hands, Floof walking beside them both.

Techno goes to put Tommy's clothes away in the closet in his room, and send the kid off for a bath. Tommy seems baffled at the fact he can even have a bath, at the fact Techno just has the water for that, and Techno responds by adding soap into the water and letting the kid have bubbles. Tommy doesn't complain, and seems quietly pleased.

The sun sets with the apartment having a bit of a different atmosphere in it, and Technoblade tries to keep to his routine, changing into more comfortable clothes now that it's night, planning on what to make to eat tomorrow, and lighting a few lanterns around the apartment to give it some sort of lighting.

Tommy comes out from his bath with damp hair and a tired face, and Techno sends him off to go to sleep, telling him that the cow he's become so attached to is sitting on the blankets. Tommy listens, and Technoblade goes to continue his routine as Tommy goes to bed.

Tommy doesn't sleep though.

Not right away. He does try, he does, it should be easier than it has been for the past several weeks. He's been sleeping on hard surfaces, no soft blankets and definitely no plushies to hold onto. The room is dim, the only light source being the dim glow of the lanterns outside of the bedroom. It's quiet, no voices and no arguments that Tommy has to tune out. By all means, it should be so much easier for him to drift off to sleep.

But he can't. There's an aching feeling in his chest, and he keeps thinking about Wilbur, about seeing him again, and about how he's going to be living here now. Away from Dream, but also still away from Wilbur. Hopefully, Dream keeps up his side of the deal, and goes to search for Wilbur, to bring him back.

The bed is big, enough room for Tommy to just roll around and still have bed to lie on. He tries moving around in different positions, tries sleeping on his back, his side, his stomach, but it doesn't change the fact that he feels alone.

So he kicks off his blanket, and settles with a new mission, ignoring the way hesitation creeps up in his chest.

Tommy slides off of the bed, his socks quietly padding across the floor as he walks around it, going over to the bedroom door that's left just slightly ajar. He pulls the door open, peeking through and finding that the dim light is coming from the kitchen, Technoblade probably doing something in there.

Stepping quietly out of the room, Tommy holds the cow plushie close to his chest and walks through the apartment, going into the kitchen and finding Technoblade to be sitting down at the kitchen table. He's writing down something in a book, one hand running through his own hair, and the other scribbling down words with a pen. There's a lantern sitting on the table in front of him, lighting up the kitchen with a yellow hue.

The band-aid Tommy had stuck onto his hand earlier is still there, bright red. Techno's hair is pulled back in a loose ponytail, and only now does Tommy seem to realize that it's actually pink. Somehow, that fact always went over his head, with everything.

"Techno." Tommy says, Techno's head jerking up, and he looks behind him, turning in his seat.

He blinks, faltering for a moment at the sight of Tommy hugging a small cow plushie, an unhappy expression on his face. "What?" Techno asks slowly, raising an eyebrow.

"I can't sleep."

"...You can't sleep?" Techno repeats. Tommy nods.

“I mean- I tried to.” Tommy raises up the plushie. “But I can’t sleep.”

“Are you scared of something?” Technoblade asks. Now that he thinks about it, maybe he should’ve put a lantern or something in the bedroom. Would’ve been better for the kid to sleep with a nightlight of some sort.

Tommy makes a face. “*No*. I’m never scared. But-” He pauses, looking down at his feet.

“What?”

“Wilby always slept next to me.” Tommy mutters. “I don’t like sleeping alone.”

Techno narrows his eyes a bit, thinking of Tommy mentioning this before. Something about Dream and his group, how no one ever slept next to him. Tommy had been particularly upset over that fact, when he was complaining about reasons he didn’t like the group.

Tommy’s face is apprehensive, and he seems like he’s waiting for Technoblade to explode, or to tell him to turn back around and go to sleep anyway. He’s already taken a step back, halfway through going back to bed in disappointment.

Techno wouldn’t doubt that’s what the others did, sending the kid back to bed while being busy with their own plans on survival. Maybe the kid is clingy while sleeping. Maybe he kicks, or something. So they just made him sleep on his own.

Putting the pen in his hand to the side, and closing the book in front of him, Techno sighs under his breath and reaches for the lantern, scooting his chair back as he stands up. “Okay.”

“Huh?” Tommy blinks.

“I still have to finish up writing something, so I’m going to have to keep the lantern on, ok?” Techno asks, holding the small journal and pen in one hand, the lantern in the other. “Come

on.” He urges Tommy with a nod of his head, and Tommy quickly goes, practically running back to the bedroom, Techno following at a slow walk.

Tommy’s climbing back onto the bed as Techno walks in, and he sits with his back up against the headboard, holding his plushie loosely in his hands. Techno walks around the bed, placing the lantern down on the nightstand and sitting down, scooting back while adjusting the pillows behind him. He crosses one leg over the other, leans back, and opens up the journal again, trying to find where he had left off.

“What are you writing?” Tommy asks, crawling closer and leaning in to try and read Techno’s handwriting. Technoblade nudges him in the arm to try and get some personal space, but the kid doesn’t get the hint.

“A journal entry.” Techno answers, finding where he had been before. “It’s good to write down about the days, be aware of the passing of time, little details and things like that.”

“Am I in it?” Tommy asks, putting his cow down beside Techno’s thigh, sitting up on his knees and resting a hand on Techno’s shoulder as he tries to read the pages. “Are you writing about me?”

“Yeah.” Technoblade taps the end of his pen into Tommy’s face, getting a scrunched nose in response. Tommy leans back. “I’m writing about Dream, too.”

“Ugh.” Tommy rolls his eyes. “Write more about me, I’m better than Dream.”

“Dream is better than Tommy, got it.” Technoblade mutters, writing down in his journal. He hasn’t actually written that, but it gets Tommy riled up all the same.

“No! Erase that.”

“It’s pen.”

“Then cross it out, say, ‘Tommy is a big man, and he’s so cool.’” Tommy jabs a finger into his journal, Techno lifting the pen up so he won’t accidentally make a mark of ink. “And also I’m your best friend, put that too.”

“I wouldn’t say we’re best friends.” Technoblade says slowly, raising his eyebrows.

“No, we’re friends.” Tommy nods, laying back on the bed and taking his cow back from where it’s laying against Techno’s leg. He rests his head on his pillow, facing towards Technoblade, his plushie held up underneath his chin. “I think we’re friends.”

“You don’t even know anything about me.” Technoblade says, repeating what he said earlier today.

“Then tell me stuff.” Tommy yawns. “My name is Tommy, I’m almost eight, and I don’t like zombies. Now you.”

Technoblade looks at Tommy with an amused face, but Tommy looks up at him with a dead serious expression.

“Okay... My name is Technoblade, I’m twenty-four, and I also don’t like zombies.”

“Zombies suck.” Tommy hums. “I’m Tommy, and I have a brother named Wilbur. He’s dumb, but I miss him.”

“What do you miss about him?” Techno asks.

“Everything.” Tommy says truthfully. “He used to sing for me a lot, he likes to sing.”

“Yeah?”

“Mhm-hm.” Tommy nods. “Now your turn. And I also get to ask a question.”

Technoblade thinks for a moment. He could just tell the kid to go to sleep, so he can finish up writing about today, without any interruptions.

But this is new. Technoblade’s never had someone playing 20 questions right before bed, and he would be lying if he said he didn’t want to play along just a bit.

“I’m Techno, and...I used to have a friend named Phil. He was a very good friend.” Techno says slowly, and he watches as Tommy clearly struggles with thinking of asking a question.

“What do you miss about him?” Tommy asks, copying Techno’s question.

Technoblade hums, not answering for a moment. “His company. He was nice to hang around with.”

Tommy stares at Techno for a long moment, seeming to consider something. “What happened to Phil?”

“He’s dead, kid.” Technoblade responds, a bit cold.

A frown tugs at Tommy’s face, and he kicks foot against Techno’s knee. “But what happened? Maybe he isn’t dead. Like Wilbur. Dream thought he was dead, but I know he’s not, because I saw him get away.”

Technoblade doesn’t answer for a moment, looking back at Tommy, who stares back, unyielding. “There was...there was a car crash, at the start of the apocalypse. He got bit.”

Techno remembers the sinking feeling of dread and fear in his chest, the way Phil had practically shielded Technoblade with his own body as he pulled him away from their car. Technoblade had gotten away with a busted leg, but Phil got away with a zombie leaning through the window, grabbing at his arm and-

Phil got Technoblade out of there. Phil got him to think straight and survive. And then Phil stayed behind.

Technoblade refuses to ever let that sacrifice be in vain.

“Oh.” Tommy pokes a finger at Techno’s hand. “I guess he is a zombie.”

“I guess so.” Techno never saw him turn, but he knows Phil didn’t make it. With a bite on the arm and Phil being caught in the horde, his chances of survival were too low. He’s gone. He’s gone. Technoblade knows this, and he can’t linger on it, or it’ll just get worse.

“Why do you like that cow?” Techno asks, changing the subject. He pokes at the plushie in Tommy’s hands.

“Because I like cows.” Tommy huffs, smacking Techno’s hand away. “They’re cool and shit. This is my cow now. You can’t have it back.”

“Sure.” Technoblade huffs. “That’s not even my favorite one anyway.” He leans forward, searching in the blankets for the few stray plushies that are thrown around. He pulls out a little stuffed pig, putting it right in front of Tommy’s face. “That one is my favorite.”

Tommy sits up, pushing himself onto his knees, picking up the pig with an almost judgmental face. “This is a pig.”

“Yup.”

Tommy holds the plushie up to Techno, as if he's comparing it. "Is that why your hair is pink?"

Techno blinks, then snorts. "Sure. I wanted my hair to be the same color." That's not really the reason, but it might as well be.

"Hm. Weird." Tommy gives a little glare towards the pig. "What's its name? My cow is named Henry." Tommy pushes the cow towards Technoblade, Techno picking it up and poking at the little face of the cow.

"I haven't named it."

"You should name it."

"Alright. What do I name it, then?" Technoblade says, pressing the cow plushie up into Tommy's face, Tommy smiling and batting away the plush.

"Something cool." Tommy grins, seeming excited with a sparkle in his eyes.

"Hm." Technoblade puts Henry down in front of Tommy, Tommy snatching it back up, pressing it to his chest. "Bob."

"No!" Tommy immediately protests. "That's not a cool name!"

"Hey, it's my pig, you said I should name it."

"Name it something other than *Bob*."

"I like the name Bob."

“Ugh.” Tommy leans forward, whacking Techno in the arm with the pig plushie. “You’re shit at naming stuff.” He hits Techno again.

“Stop hitting me.”

“No, you suck at naming.” Tommy hits him once more. He uses both Henry and Bob to hit Technoblade in the arm. “You’re the worst namer in history.”

“I doubt that.” Technoblade drawls. “Stop it.”

“No.” Tommy hits Techno in the side of the head with his cow.

“I’m warning you.”

Tommy just tries to smack him in the face again. Technoblade leans out of the way, Tommy missing, then screaming loudly as he gets smacked across the head with a pillow, face planting into the blankets.

“Warned you.” Technoblade says, throwing the pillow to the side as Tommy pushes himself onto his back, his arm thrown over Techno’s leg, his head against his hip. He sighs with one big breath, then sucks in air and holds it, making an angry face with his cheeks puffed up.

Techno just flicks the kid on the nose, Tommy losing his breath in one fell swoop.

“You’re a terrible friend.” Tommy declares, turning his head the other side, only for Techno’s hand to follow and flick him once again. “Stop it!”

Techno flicks him once more. Tommy tries to smack him with his cow plushie, and Technoblade smacks the kid over the head with a pillow again.

Tommy does eventually tire himself out, passing out sprawled out on the bed, clutching Henry in his hands. Technoblade finishes writing down in his journal, and he turns off the lantern, turning over in his bed, and ignoring the fact the kid is kicking his feet into his back.

Wilbur wakes up with a startle, gasping a bit with panic in his chest. He looks around, eyes wide, and finds that he's on a cot of some sort, with an ache in his shoulder.

Tommy.

That's the first thing he thinks of, and that's what compels him to get up, trying to think of what he did last. Last he remembers, he had been stuck in a building for a solid week, trying to escape the hoard, trying to get back with Dream, George, Sapnap, and Tommy.

Then he couldn't find them, and he got into trouble with a group of people who wanted to rob him. He ran, got far, got lost. Traveled a bit more, found a town. Kept moving, kept traveling, got into trouble once more, and he feels like he might've fallen down a set of stairs?

That would explain the ache in his shoulder. And his arm. And his leg. Honestly, he's just aching all around.

Standing up from the bed, Wilbur observes the room around him a bit more, finding that it's filled with more beds, something like an infirmary, maybe. He limps a bit in his steps, and goes straight for the door, finding that it leads directly outside onto gravel, showing that he's in fact, in yet another town.

Not where he wanted to be, but better than being dead, he supposes.

“Woah, hey, hey!” Someone calls, and Wilbur turns his head, finds someone quickly walking his way. They’re wearing a skirt, he notes, and sunglasses. Unusual choice of fashion in the apocalypse, but really, Wilbur has seen weirder. “You’re not supposed to be up, man!”

“I need to go.” Wilbur points a finger, trying to walk more outside, only for the person to quickly stop him.

“Hey, wait- I’m Eret, I’m supposed to making sure you’re not going to die anytime soon, and also, you really should be resting-”

“I need to go find someone.” Wilbur insists, trying to step around them. He looks around, finds more buildings scattered around, a few people walking in and out of them. It’s night, rather late, and so Wilbur assumes that the people here must be asleep. That, or there’s barely any people at all. He turns back to Eret. “I need to go look for my little brother, I got separated from him, he’s seven years old, blond hair, blue eyes, stubborn as hell. His name is Tommy.”

Eret hums a bit. “That description reminds me of Phil, heh.” They grin, and shake their head to steady themselves. “Listen, I’m sorry you’ve lost him for the time being, but you’re honestly not going anywhere even if you wanted to. There’s a hoard about to hit outside the walls, and you’re still a bit injured from when we found you-”

“Who’s Phil?” Wilbur asks. Eret blinks.

“A traveler who’s been hanging around a bit. He’s supposed to be back by now actually, but I wouldn’t be surprised if he’s got himself caught up in something. The man is always ending up in life or death situations, honestly. But he’s stubborn, and he’s been delivering supplies without a hitch, so.” Eret shrugs with a small smile. “He’s lucky with surviving.”

Wilbur narrows his eyes.

“...Theoretically, would this man be able to give me directions to somewhere?”

Eret makes a face. "...yes...and he'll probably lead you there too, but I also bet he'd only agree if you were actually well rested, so why don't we go inside, and you can tell me your name, maybe what happened before we found you-"

"Open the gates!" Someone yells from the top of the walls, and both Eret and Wilbur turn their heads with interest, seeing a few people run past with weapons held in hand. "Phil's back, open the gates!" Fundy yells from above.

"Wait, wait, the hoard is right there-!" Someone goes to protests, only to be cut off by the way Niki slams her spear into the gate doors, letting loose a loud bang against the metal.

"Open the fucking gates!" She yells, knowing Phil is on the other side.

Wilbur goes to lean closer to see what's happening, but Eret holds onto his arm, seeming to be worried about Wilbur just rushing forward towards the chaos. The gates creak open just the slightest bit, and Wil watches with surprise as a man runs through, zombies right behind him. They're quickly picked off, though, and the gates are closed shut again.

"That's Phil." Eret supplies, seeming not at all surprised, and rather happy that Phil's just barely escaped death.

"Huh." Wilbur says, looking at the man walking quickly with a grin, stopping in place as a few people stand beside him, striking up conversation, running off the adrenaline of a close call. Phil doesn't seem all that remarkable, a bag slung over his shoulder, black gloves, green coat, and a bucket hat on his head. "My name is Wilbur, by the way." Wil says to Eret, then breaks away from his grip, quickly speed walking right towards Phil.

"Wha- Wilbur? Wilbur!" Eret calls, following hesitantly behind as Wilbur makes a bee-line right to Phil. He can hear the conversations as he approaches.

"-I swear, one of these days, you're honestly not going to make it."

“How have you not gotten bit at this point, man?”

Phil laughs a bit, waving a hand. “I’m just lucky, mate, don’t worry about it. I won’t let it be such a close call next time-”

“Phil, is it?” Wilbur cuts in, heads turning to him and Eret who’s trailing behind, slightly panicked. “I’d like to ask a favor from you!”

Chapter End Notes

this chapter is almost 10k words. Ten. THOUSAND. AHG.

But ey, bedrock bros content. And Phil and Wilbur content! That's fun. Pls do put ur theories about the story in the comments, I love reading those :D

now for some questions that should be answered:

Q:What kind of dog is Floof?

A: Honestly I see him as like a wolf type of dog. Makes it easier for Floof to murder zombies :P

Q:How the fuck is Phil alive??

A: Oh, I won't tell yet, but you're welcome to theorize!

Q:Will there be angst?

A: Eh, probably not. The only angst there is in this story is from the backstories. It's just family dynamics and fluff from here on out! (Fluff is my thing, if you haven't noticed at this point)

Thanks for reading!! Follow me on twitter @sircantus, I ramble a lot about SBI there too :D

Animal plushies are the best thing ever tbh

“Wilbur-!” Eret says frantically, hands grabbing at the back of Wilbur’s shirt, and Wil just barrels on through, ignoring the fact that there’s fatigue pulling at his limbs, and the start of a headache coming on. He stumbles a bit as he speedwalks across the short distance between him and his target, and he’s already forming a bit of a plan in his head. He’s got to get back to Tommy. He’s got to *find* Tommy.

Before, he was rather busy with the tedious task of just trying to stay alive, because if he died to a zombie tearing him apart, how could he ever get back to Tommy? But now, he’s in a town of some sort, very obviously protected, and full of people who seem capable of letting him stay alive. Now that safety is taken care of, the mission of finding his little brother has taken priority, and Wilbur zeros in on the first candidate who might be able to help.

Phil seems lucky, considering what Eret has said. Luck in this world is also a mix of skill, though, and Wilbur would like those skills to help him get back to Tommy. Phil is currently talking with two other people, a woman with blond hair and a man with a shaved head. They notice the way Wilbur’s coming right for them, and the way he seems to stumble just a bit, not because of Eret trying to pull him back.

“Woah- Are you alright, man-?” Jack asks, stepping away from Phil and raising his arms out as Wilbur nearly trips, using Jack as something to push off of and keep himself upright.

“Who are you?” Phil asks, raising his eyebrows, and Niki answers that question for him.

“Uh, we brought him in earlier today, Fundy found him on patrol.” She nods up to the wall, where Fundy is currently looking out at the zombie hoard, keeping watch with a few others. “He was knocked out on the ground when we found him...” She trails off as Wilbur steps past Jack, standing up straight and holding a hand out to Phil.

“I’m Wilbur.” Wilbur says, keeping his hand up for a handshake. Phil almost snorts.

“Shouldn’t he be back in the infirmary-?” She whispers towards Eret.

“He just started walking away.” Eret sighs.

“Can I ask a favor of you?” Wilbur says towards Phil, trying to keep his tone pleasant and giving a smile. “I’m in bit of need of help right now-”

“Yeah, you look like it.” Phil deadpans, grinning.

He shakes Wilbur’s hand after a solid few seconds of looking him up and down, seeming to try and figure out what sort of person Wil might be. Wilbur honestly knows he doesn’t look all that great, there’s a concerning amount of blood standing the side of his shirt and pants, and he’s relieved to say it’s not his. The beanie on his head is keeping his hair somewhat manageable, but it probably doesn’t help that much. It’s a bad first impression, but Wilbur’s been through hell for the past few weeks, so it’s justified.

Apparently, Wilbur’s appearance isn’t too much of a turn off, because Phil just shakes his hand and gives a small calm smile before letting go. “I’m Phil. Why don’t you go sit down, I think you’re going to fall on your feet, mate.” He turns to go walk more into the small town, away from Wil, and Wilbur knows from the tone of voice that he’s dismissed Wilbur and his concerns.

“I agree with that decision.” Eret mutters, practically dragging Wilbur backwards.

“Wait, I-” Wilbur says, watching Phil turn his back with no clear interest towards Wil in any way.

Phil pats at the bag that’s slung over his shoulder, talking to Niki who goes to walk with him, away from Wilbur, who starts to get led the opposite direction, towards where the ‘infirmary’ must be. Jack helps Eret to get Wilbur over there, the two of them grabbing onto Wilbur’s arms and helping him walk. Wilbur cooperates, but half of him is still fighting with himself to get back to Phil, because he has no time to just sit down and *wait* .

“I was able to get those meds from the town nearby.” Phil says to Niki, showing the bag to her. Her face lights up, Phil giving the bag over. “Hope that helps, I might stick around a bit more and look through the town to see what I can bring back, but I’ll be traveling off from here in at least two weeks from-”

“I need to find my little brother!” Wilbur yells out, loud and nearly desperate, and Phil stops in his tracks, Niki pausing when she sees Phil freeze. “He’s seven years old, stubborn and loud. We got separated about three weeks ago. He got away with another group, and I know they took him away somewhere safe, but I don’t know where he is now.”

Phil turns to Wilbur. Eret is still holding onto Wilbur’s arm, but it’s more of an assurance to keep him standing rather than to drag him to go rest. Jack stands behind him with his arms crossed, and it seems like everyone pauses the moment it seems like Phil actually wants to listen.

“I need to find him.” Wilbur says slowly, tilting his head down a bit, Phil’s face carefully blank. Niki glances towards Phil with wide eyes, and her hands clutch at the bag of meds she’s holding. “Do you think you could help me?”

“What would I get in return?” Phil asks, Wilbur smiling wide in a way that’s more like he’s baring his teeth.

“I have nothing to offer.” Wilbur says bitterly, and he huffs. “I’m just asking for help.”

Phil’s eyes light up with something bright, and he smiles.

Technoblade wakes up to a tiny hand over his face and his shoulder being used as a pillow. It’s still dark, still night, and the lantern beside him has gone dim, so he probably wasn’t asleep for too long.

Either way though, it's a bit jarring to find another small human being, snoring on top of him and stealing his blankets. Tommy seems to have no regard for personal space, not even in his sleep, and Technoblade carefully pulls Tommy's hand off his cheek, placing it down near his chest instead. He turns his head to try and look down at Tommy, finding a head of blond hair just underneath his chin. He thinks the kid might be drooling onto his shirt.

Technoblade feels a bit of irritation rise up in him, mostly because he hadn't meant to fall asleep here and become a human pillow, and also because *why* did the kid just decide to gravitate towards him while asleep? The bed is plenty big enough for him to give Technoblade some space, but no, the kid has to cling to Techno, making him trapped. He literally can't scoot away, he's laying down right with the edge of the bed on one side, and Tommy on the other. The only choices here are to either accept his fate, or try and move Tommy off him.

Floof is sleeping on the floor right beside Techno, curled up on the carpet with his tail flicking in his sleep every now and then. Techno would find it kinda funny if he weren't currently being held hostage by a sleeping child.

Sighing quietly under his breath, Technoblade very slowly and very carefully tries to move away, scooting off inch by inch and moving Tommy away. Technoblade is very nearly about to fall off the bed as he almost succeeds in getting Tommy off him. The kid mutters a bit in his sleep, and Techno goes very still.

Tommy is still holding onto his sleeve with a loose grip, and his foot is resting on Techno's leg, so Techno moves Tommy's foot off, and goes to pull off his hand, quickly standing up and getting off of the bed. He hops over Floof at his feet, and stumbles back a bit, hands raised out and straining his ears for any sign that he's woken up Tommy.

Tommy stays sleeping, turning over in the bed, and muttering something under his breath once more.

Techno sighs, stepping around Floof and picking up the lantern from the nightstand, using what little light it produces to try and make his way out of the room. He goes out into the hallway, keeping the bedroom door open just the slightest bit behind him.

Walking through the apartment, Technoblade goes over to the kitchen and relights a few lanterns, keeping the darkness away so he can actually see what he's doing.

He's left his journal back in the room, but he doesn't bother to go get it, and instead just goes to look through the cabinets, his movements slow and careful so he won't have to make any noise. It's a bit weird, having to walk softly and move carefully. It's been a while since he's had to worry about being quiet.

Before, having to stay quiet was more of a need for survival. Loud noises could bring zombies his direction, and he didn't need that at all. He would step quietly, move silently. Then when he settled here, the threat of zombies became a bit pathetic, and he didn't care about the way his boots stomped against the ground, how sometimes he would drop something on the floor and hear it clatter loudly. The sound gave him panic the first few times, but he got over it, got used to being safe again and having no worries.

Now he has worries again. But it's not the threat of having blood-thirsty zombies coming at him, it's the possibility of waking up a kid from his sleep and Techno having to deal with the fact that said kid is always chattering about *something*.

Not that Techno is annoyed with the constant talking. That's just something new, he kinda enjoys the new noise, but after all of today, he would like a bit of silence.

Technoblade looks through the kitchen to figure out breakfast for tomorrow, just so he can get a headstart. He's not sure if Tommy is picky about certain foods or not, so he wants to try and avoid that problem by making something in the morning that's just simple to eat.

There's a box of pancake mix tucked away in the pantry, and Techno pulls it out and places it onto the counter, along with a can of peaches. The kid was poking at peaches back in the storagehouse earlier. He'll have peaches for breakfast, then.

Picking up the box and walking over to the light of a lantern, Techno leans back against the counter, reading over the writing on the back, trying to see what exactly he's going to need to do. He could make these when Tommy wakes up, or he can just stay up and wait till sunrise and make it then. Technoblade has a habit of a bad sleep schedule, but at least he has the freedom of sleeping past the afternoon whenever he likes.

Techno- pauses a bit, eyes stuck on the pancake box, but not really reading it.

It sinks in that Techno is going to be having a kid around his home for the indefinite future. An actual kid, just running around, constantly asking for his attention, his time. Technoblade has been on his own for a long while, and now he's suddenly committed to having a child underneath his wing.

In just one day, his entire routine has become a bit skewed, and now he's going to have company, going to have chatter around the apartment, going to have Tommy ask questions and poke at his things and-

Techno leans back a bit more.

What did he get himself into?

By all means, the kid can't be around forever. Wilbur, whoever he is, is bound to come back, or Dream will get back with the news of Wilbur's death, and then Tommy is out of his hands, no longer his concern. Then, Techno can just give the kid over, and that's that.

Although, doing that might be a lot harder than it sounds.

Techno isn't attached. He's not. He hardly knows the kid, and he's only here to keep Tommy alive and in good hands until Wilbur comes back to pick him up. But Tommy is endearing, even with how annoying and loud he is. The questions, the bickering, the simple new feeling of company, Technoblade feels reluctant to let that go.

It's not much of a concern, though. It'll take time for Wilbur to get here. Technoblade doesn't need to worry, by the time Wilbur or Dream comes to pick up Tommy, Techno will be sick of the kid, probably, and it'll be over.

Probably.

Hopefully.

Maybe?

Techno frowns. He's thinking too much about this. Maybe he should go to sleep.

He looks back at the box in his hands, skimming over the words, and he's about to go search for a bowl so he can have the things needed out on the counter already, when he's stopped by the sound of his name being yelled.

"Techno?" Tommy's calls from his room, and Technoblade jolts, snapping his head up towards the sound. "Techno?!"

Technoblade practically throws the box at the counter, picking up the lantern nearest to him and quickly walking through the apartment, his heart jumping up in his throat at the panicked tone in Tommy's voice.

"Technoblade!" Tommy calls again, his voice wavering as Technoblade pushes the door open a bit more forcefully than needed, walking inside.

"What, what's happening?" Technoblade says, holding out the lantern in front of him and giving a quick look around the room to see anything that could be a threat. Floof should keep everything safe, though, the dog would be barking his head off if anything was amiss, so it couldn't be that. Doesn't hurt to check, though. "What's wrong?" Techno asks, as his gaze falls onto Tommy.

"I-" Tommy snuffles, crying as he kneels in the middle of the bed, looking around with his hands grabbing at the blankets. "I can't find Henry!"

Oh.

Well, that's hardly good enough of a reason for the way Techno nearly had a heart attack, but he has a feeling it's a very big deal to Tommy, considering the fact he's sobbing quietly, his hands trembling as he tries to search around in the blankets and pillows. The sight tugs at something in Techno's chest, and he doesn't like the feeling.

"Alright, that's alright." Techno says gently, walking more into the room, and leaning forward towards the bed.

"No, no it's not! I don't know where he is, I can't-" Tommy huffs, wiping at his face. "I dunno where he went!"

"He's probably just hiding underneath one of the blankets." Technoblade says, resting one knee onto the bed, holding the lantern out towards Tommy. "Here, hold this for me."

Tommy takes it with both hands, still sniffing and trying to compose himself as Technoblade works on looking through the blankets for Tommy, pulling up the sheets and searching through the bed with the help of added light. There's no stuffed cow, though, and Technoblade considers just throwing the pillows onto the ground so he can search better.

"Have you found him?" Tommy asks, impatient, and crying a bit less, with Techno's presence.

"Give me a second..." Techno pauses. The little cow plush isn't anywhere here on the bed, so it must've fallen off, maybe. Techno backs up off the bed and kneels down, looking underneath the bed instead. Sure enough, right there, a little stuffed cow is within reach.

Technoblade reaches out and picks it up, standing up straight with the cow in his hands. Tommy's face lights up, and he makes a little scream, holding a hand out and practically yanking it out of Techno's grip when Technoblade gives it over.

Techno sighs quietly, watching as Tommy presses his face against the soft material of the little cow, then sniffs again, looking up at Technoblade.

“Thank you.” Tommy says, like it’s an afterthought and he’s only just remembered he’s supposed to thank Techno.

“No problem.” Technoblade waves a hand, and he’s about to reach out to grab the lantern from Tommy, only for Tommy to turn around and crawl across the bed, carefully putting the lantern down on the nightstand. He then flops back onto a pillow, holding Henry to his chest and looking at Technoblade expectantly.

Right. Can’t sleep alone.

Techno huffs, accepting his fate and just going to lay down beside Tommy, giving a comfortable amount of room between them both. Tommy ignores his efforts entirely and scoots towards him, turning over on his side and poking his feet into Techno’s leg.

“Oh!” Tommy suddenly sits up, looking through the pillows beside him, and he pulls out the little pig plushie Techno had shown him earlier. “Here you go.” He says, holding it out to Techno with a satisfied expression.

“Thanks.” Technoblade holds back the urge to scoff a little, a smile pulling at his lips. “No way I would’ve been able to sleep without this.”

“Mhm-hm.” Tommy nods, not catching the slight sarcasm that’s in Techno’s voice. He lays back down on his side, facing towards Techno. “Sleeping is hard when you’re alone.” Tommy says, like he knows it all too well. “I woke up, right now, and you weren’t here, but I thought I could go back to sleep anyway with Henry, but then I couldn’t find him, and it’s too dark to see anything.”

“I was just in the kitchen.” Technoblade says. “And you have your cow now, don’t you?”

“Yeah.” Tommy hums. “What were you doing?”

“Looking through stuff.”

“What stuff?”

“Breakfast stuff.”

“It’s not even morning, though.” Tommy yawns, face scrunching up into something displeased. “It’s still night, that’s too early for breakfast.”

“I was making sure we had what we needed to make breakfast.” Technoblade responds, grinning a bit at the way Tommy makes a frown.

“But you were supposed to be *asleep* .”

“I can sleep when I want.”

“No, you sleep at night,” Tommy jabs a hand into Techno’s side. “And then you wake up in the day, when it’s not dark.”

“I sleep when I feel like it, and I wake up when I feel like it.”

“Then I can just stay up then?” Tommy sits up, only to scream and get yanked back down by Techno, who pulls at his hand and lets the kid faceplant into a pillow. “Hey!”

“You wouldn’t even be able to stay up late.” Techno scoffs, Tommy smacking him in the face with his cow.

“Yes I can, watch, I’m going to stay up all the way until the sun comes up, and then you’re going to fall asleep, because you’re so tired and sleepy and dumb.”

Technoblade raises an eyebrow. “Okay.”

“Really!”

“Yeah, definitely.” Techno nods. “That’s totally what’s going to happen.”

“Watch me.” Tommy burrows into his blanket, holding Henry to his chest with an angry face. “You just watch me, I’m going to stay up *all* night.”

Techno snorts.

The kid knocks out within the next twenty minutes.

Technoblade falls to sleep soon after.

“You know, I really was telling the truth when I said I had nothing to offer.” Wilbur says, leaning back against the wall his bed is up beside, an empty bowl in his lap. Apparently, there was still some stew from the kitchens in the town. The people there were glad to give him some. “I have nothing valuable on me.”

“Eh, I don’t really want anything.” Phil shrugs, not even looking at Wilbur, instead looking through a backpack. It’s filled with food, supplies, and Phil hums, zipping it up and putting it on the ground. “I was planning on traveling somewhere else anyway, at least now I’ve got something to do. And I’m probably the best person for you.”

Wilbur raises his eyebrows. “Eret said you’re lucky.”

“Most times.” Phil waves a hand. “Ah, I tend to get into a lot of trouble, but I also get out of it, too. I’m the most reliable for going out past the walls, I’m used to narrowly avoiding death, and things like that. People say I’ve got a death wish whenever they meet me.” Phil snickers, and Wilbur just tilts his head a bit.

“You travel alone?” Wilbur asks. “Or do you have a partner of some sort, or a group?”

“Alone.” Phil shrugs. “Got a feeling we’ll be traveling together for a while, though.”

“Yeah, I suppose.” Wilbur nods. There’s still the sinking feeling in his chest each time he thinks about Tommy, thinks about where he might be. He doesn’t like it. “I really don’t know how to repay you, I mean, right now, I just want to find my little brother. That’s all I care about.”

“How old is he, again?” Phil asks. “Seven?”

“Seven, although he always insists he’s ‘almost eight’.” Wilbur smiles. “His birthday is in about a month, I think. So he says he’s practically eight.”

Phil huffs. “He sounds sweet.”

“Oh, he’s a little shit.” Wilbur deadpans, and Phil chokes on laughter. “But I love him.”

“Then I’ll help, mate.” Phil grins, honest in every way. “I’ll help.”

Technoblade wakes up with a child on him again.

He's a little less annoyed about it this time, but that doesn't mean he enjoys the fact he's being used as a pillow, once again. He wonders if this is going to end up being a common occurrence. He could figure out a way to just give the kid a separate bed, but with the way Tommy can't sleep alone, and the bed already has enough space for them both, Techno might just not bother. Maybe he could figure out a way to make a wall of pillows to prevent the kid from grabbing onto him.

Tommy's more tucked into Techno's side, this time, rather than being sprawled out on him and drooling on his shoulder. He has an arm and leg laying on Techno, his hand having a light grip onto Techno's shirt. Techno is pretty sure that Henry is tucked underneath Tommy's chin, hidden from view underneath his arm that's laying on Techno.

Tommy sleeps with slow breaths, peaceful and undisturbed, and for a split second, Techno almost doesn't want to get up. Almost.

There's a bit of sunlight coming into the room from the window, lighting up the room in a yellow-ish hue. Technoblade glances down at his feet to find Floof sleeping there, having jumped onto the bed in the middle of the night, apparently. It's blissfully quiet, the only noise being Tommy snoring softly in his sleep.

Techno tries to think about what he needs to do today. He should probably go check on the garden on the roof. He needs to take his usual walks around the streets. He suddenly remembers about the hole that Tommy had come in through, and he realizes he needs to patch that up, so no one else can get in. There's something to add on the to do list. He should recount the supplies in the storagehouse, now that some of the supplies were given away to Dream and his friends.

Sighing a bit under his breath, Technoblade goes to scoot away from Tommy once more, careful to not wake the kid up and prying his hands away. As careful as he is though, Tommy ends up opening his eyes and blinking blearily up at Technoblade, one arm still wrapped around Henry, and his other arm splayed out across the bed towards Techno.

“Huh?” Tommy mumbles, still half asleep, and Technoblade stands up from the bed, pulling at the blankets so they can cover Tommy.

“Go back to sleep.” Technoblade says.

“Tech'blade.” Tommy responds, mumbling with his eyes half open, and then he squints at Techno for a few seconds more, before burying his face into the top of Henry’s head and falling back to sleep, as if he wasn’t awake at all.

Technoblade doesn’t know what to call the emotion sitting in his chest right now, but he feels like he might die in the next five minutes if he keeps looking at Tommy, so he just quickly walks off to get ready for the morning, leaving Floof to watch Tommy, the dog resting at the kid’s feet.

Personally I think Philza should be allowed to commit War Crimes /j

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

There's still the box of pancake mix from last night sitting on the counter, knocked over from how quickly Technoblade had rushed to go help Tommy with finding Henry. Techno puts it right-side up and goes to look through the cabinets, taking out a large bowl and putting it down beside the box.

Walking out of the kitchen, Technoblade goes to draw the curtains open and let the sunlight into the apartment, making the knives hanging up in the living room gleam. The only sound that Techno can hear is the quiet steps of his socks against the carpet, and he takes a moment to look out the window, breathing in deep and letting it out. The weather looks like it'll be alright for today, but there's some worrying clouds far off in the distance that could mean rain. Not that rain is a bad thing, if anything, it's an opportunity to get some water, but it makes walking outside tedious. Techno never liked getting soaked.

Then again, maybe the rain will be nicer this time around. For all he knows, Tommy might enjoy it. He'll have to be careful to not let the kid run around much in the puddles, though. He doesn't want him to catch a cold.

Technoblade huffs, rubbing at the back of the neck as he leans away from his window.

One day with the kid, and this is his thought process now, constant worries for Tommy. At least it gives him something to do, no room or time to fall into his thoughts and overthink much.

He goes back into the kitchen with a long yawn, stretching his arms up and sighing, then getting to work on actually making breakfast. The instructions on the pancake mix are painfully easy, and it's not long before Technoblade has a small stack of three pancakes on a plate beside him, and another one still cooking in the pan. He goes to open the can of peaches, and pauses a bit at seeing the red band-aid on his hand.

Tommy's leg should be checked out, now that he thinks about it. The kid washed it off and everything, but that doesn't mean there's no chance of infection of the non-zombie kind. Technoblade has medicine, plenty of it stocked up, but he'd prefer to have to not use it.

Flipping the pancake that's currently cooking, Technoblade steps through the kitchen to look for where he keeps the little med-kit, and lays it out on the counter, looking for band-aids. He finds two boxes of band-aids, simple ones, and brightly colored ones. He chooses the colorful box and puts it on the kitchen table after putting away the med-kit.

Taking two more plates out, Techno sets them on the counter and puts two pancakes on each, along with some of the peaches from the can. It's simple, and Technoblade blinks at it for a moment before remembering he should probably take out the syrup. He thankfully has some in the pantry, even though it's been a rather long while since he's ever even had syrup.

He has a feeling there's going to be a lot of little changes now, with Tommy being around. Honestly, taking the kid in was an impulse decision. Maybe a really drastic one, but hey, look at his hair. Technoblade tends to make drastic impulse decisions on a whim.

With Tommy around, Technoblade feels like there's a certain weight resting on his shoulders now. It's not a bad weight, he doesn't mind carrying it. When he looks at the kid and his stubborn little face, he just has the quiet urge to protect him. Keep him safe, keep him happy. A kid that young deserves to be happy, even in an apocalyptic world like this.

Not just that, but Tommy, in a way, makes Techno happy as well. The kid is interesting, chatty, and Techno likes the new experience of it. He likes the company. He's never been a people person, no, that's too much, but it's easy to somewhat trust the kid, because Techno doubts that he would ever have any nefarious intentions.

Technoblade is pulled out of his thoughts with the sound of paws trotting along the kitchen tile, and he looks down at his feet just as fluffy fur brushes against his ankles. Floof looks up at Technoblade for a moment before jumping up and stretching against Techno's leg.

"Good morning to you too." Technoblade huffs, turning the stove off and reaching down to scratch behind Floof's ear. Floof jumps down from Techno's leg, stepping back and giving

the start of a bark. “Sh.” Technoblade holds a finger to his lips, quickly going to give Floof his food for the morning. Floof just barks in response. “Shhh. You’ll wake up Tommy.”

He goes to fill Floof’s bowl, Floof immediately chomping down before Technoblade can even fully stand up and step back from the bowl.

Turning his head towards the living room, Techno waits for a moment to see if Tommy is going to be walking into the kitchen anytime soon, but the kid is nowhere to be found, and Technoblade glances towards the plates of food sitting on the counter.

He could let the kid sleep in. But the food might go cold, and Technoblade doesn’t want to hear Tommy complaining over cold pancakes.

Technoblade leaves Floof to continue eating his food, and walks out of the kitchen to make his way through the apartment. He carefully pushes the door open, keeping his steps light as he peeks in.

The room is dim, curtains still kept closed, and he can see Tommy curled up underneath a blanket in the center of the bed, a mess of blond curls just peeking out. There’s a quiet snoring that can be heard through the room, and Technoblade listens to it for a moment, before walking around the bed, leaving the door open behind him.

He goes for the curtains, pulling them open and letting the sunlight pour into the room, chasing away the last bits of darkness in order to start the morning. Tommy continues to sleep, but he is a bit disturbed in his slumber, the kid turning over and trying to bury his face into a pillow.

“Tommy.” Technoblade says, glancing out the window, reminding himself to go check on that gap in the barrier today. He should probably check the other walls too for any holes. “Wake up, it’s morning.”

Tommy mutters something in response, but it’s lost in the pillows, and Technoblade walks over to the bed, resting a knee into the mattress and leaning forward so he can shake the kid a bit.

“Tommy.” Technoblade calls again, and Tommy seems to actively ignore him in order to keep sleeping, so Techno yanks the blanket off of him.

Tommy wakes up at that, but he’s very much not happy about it, turning over on his back with a grumpy expression. “*Wilby*.” He mumbles, squinting up at Technoblade with a childish anger in his eyes.

“Nope.” Techno says, and feels a twinge of sympathy for the way Tommy’s face shifts into quiet disappointment, but then it’s quickly back to annoyance. “It’s Techno. And you should wake up.”

“Techno.” Tommy hisses, like he is the bane of his existence.

“Yup.”

“No.” Tommy tries to turn away, and Technoblade tugs at the back of his shirt. “Noooo.”

“Yes, come on.” Technoblade hums, pulling at Tommy’s arm. “Get up. We’ve got things to do today.”

“I don’t *want* to.” Tommy groans, sighing loudly and so aggressively that Technoblade feels like the kid is going to have a grudge after this.

“There’s breakfast in the kitchen, come on.”

Tommy turns back to Techno, eyes squinting up at him with a deep frown on his face. He holds his arms out towards Technoblade, almost like he wants a hug.

“No, I’m not picking you up.” Technoblade says, trying to lean back, only to have Tommy grab at his sleeve and not let go. “That was a one time thing.”

Tommy makes a noise of disapproval, waving his hands up again, Techno trying to get his sleeve free from Tommy’s grip. “Please?”

“No.” Technoblade says firmly, and Tommy- he has the *audacity* to give Technoblade puppy eyes.

Technoblade is ashamed to say it kinda works.

“Pleaseeeee-” Tommy drags on, Technoblade sighing deeply before reaching down and picking up the kid from the bed, carrying him with both arms. Tommy smiles like a little shit, and Techno hates the way he thinks it’s endearing.

“Let’s go.” Technoblade mutters, walking out of the room and down the hallway, to the kitchen where breakfast still sits on the counter, and Floof still stays eating at his bowl.

“Good morning, Floof.” Tommy chimes, yawning wide and resting his chin on Techno’s shoulder.

“I don’t get a good morning?” Technoblade asks, half-joking as he pulls out a chair by the kitchen table and puts Tommy down.

“No.” Tommy deadpans, and Technoblade narrows his eyes a bit. He then raises a hand to Tommy’s forehead and flicks the kid on the nose, hard. “OW!”

Technoblade ignores the way Tommy slaps his hands over his nose with a whine, complaining as to how Technoblade is a terrible friend, with a terrible personality, and- ooh, pancakes.

“Here.” Technoblade holds out a fork to Tommy, who almost immediately goes to eat his food with his bare hands. “Use a fork, *please*.”

“You have forks?” Tommy makes a slightly confused face, which turns into something pleased as Technoblade also puts down a bottle of syrup. “You have a lot of stuff.” Tommy says, immediately going to drown his pancakes in syrup.

“I do have that storagehouse for a reason.” Technoblade tells him, and then goes to sit down with his own food across from Tommy.

“We only had spoons, when I was with Dream. But we didn’t use them much anyway, we always ate like- granola bars. They had raisins.”

“And you don’t like raisins?” Technoblade asks, a bit amused with how Tommy’s face scrunches up into disgust as he takes a mouthful of pancakes.

“They’re shit.” Tommy says, a bit muffled with food in his mouth.

“Please chew.” Technoblade pleads. “Also, question, why do you swear so much? You’re like seven.” Techno asks. It makes sense if the kid was just around people who swore a lot, or if he just picked it up from strangers and refused to stop saying it. That sounds like something Tommy might do.

“Wilby taught me swear words.” Tommy responds, after swallowing his food. “He says it makes kidnappers not like me.”

Technoblade barely holds back a laugh. “Oh?”

“Yup.” Tommy stabs at his plate, nodding a bit. “One time, a guy tried to grabbing me when Wil wasn’t looking, so I screamed and called him bitch over and over until he let me go. Then Wilby kicked him across the face.” He takes another bite of his pancakes, looking thoughtful.

“There’s one way to do that.” Technoblade mutters. “How’s your face? Your band-aids, you need new ones?” Technoblade nudges at the box of band-aids on the table, and Tommy looks down at his knees, rolling up his pajama pants to poke at the band-aids there. After he deems it good enough, he pokes at the one on his face.

“My face one is falling off.” Tommy says, picking at it and trying to pull it off slowly. Technoblade puts down his fork and goes to open the box of band-aids so he can pull out a replacement band-aid.

“Which color?” He asks, holding up a few band-aids like before. “Red?” He asks.

“No, you get red, I want pink.” Tommy insists, kneeling up on his chair and reaching over the table with a grabby hand, Technoblade giving it over.

“You don’t like red?”

“Red is my favorite color.” Tommy nods, putting his fork down so he can try and peel away the paper covering the adhesive on the band-aid. Technoblade doesn’t know how to feel about the thought of Tommy insisting on Techno getting his favorite colored band-aids.

Techno then realizes Tommy probably isn’t going to put the band-aid on properly on his own face, so he gets up out of his seat to help. “Give it over, I’ll do it.”

“I got it, I got it.” Tommy mutters, tongue sticking out in focus. Technoblade still walks over to Tommy’s chair though, crouching down and holding a hand out, Tommy giving the band-aid over with a huff.

“Once you’re done with eating, go change, alright? We got to check that gap in the wall that you came in from, and then some other stuff.” Technoblade says, easily peeling the band-aid and then reaching up to Tommy’s face, putting it over the healing scab that came from yesterday, Tommy having fallen flat on his face.

“Why can’t I just say here?” Tommy says, making a bit of a face when Techno smooths out the band-aid with his thumb. “I don’t wanna walk, this place is safe, anyway.”

“I’m not leaving you here unsupervised.” Techno deadpans, standing up straight. “Eat your peaches.”

He ignores the grumpy little face he gets in response. (Quietly, he finds it rather endearing.)

Wilbur and Phil head out the moment the sun comes up, much to Eret’s disapproval and the slight sadness of the other townspeople. They seem to enjoy Phil’s company, and they’re all sad to see him go, giving goodbyes and hugs and any supplies they can spare. Phil only accepts what they can hold in their backpacks, but it’s good enough for the road.

“I really think you should be resting for a few more days, at least.” Eret tells Wilbur, checking him over again, Phil standing at the end of his bed with two backpacks over his shoulders, holding something in his arms, a piece of clothing.

Wilbur had been on bedrest for the entire time since Phil agreed last night, and so meanwhile, Phil has been taking care of preparing supplies and such. Already, Wilbur feels like Phil knows what he’s doing, with the way he’s geared up, ready to go at the drop of a hat.

Wilbur’s ready to go, too, having already gotten a change of clothes that aren’t bloodstained. The yellow sweater he got fits a bit too big on him, but he’s not going to complain if it’s free of zombie guts. He kept his beanie, though. No matter how dirty that thing gets, he is never going to let go of this goddamned beanie.

“We didn’t find you in good shape.” Eret continues, worry in her voice.

“I appreciate the help.” Wilbur smiles, patting at Eret’s hand before pushing it away from where they were checking his head for injuries. “But if I wait any longer, I think I’ll go insane.” Each day is another day where Tommy might think he’s dead, might think he’s gone. Each day could be a day where he’s not there to protect Tommy, and Wilbur cannot *stand* that. It tears him apart, and if he doesn’t leave this town in the next hour, he’s going to punch someone.

Phil snorts, Wilbur turning his head to him. “Are you really sure, though? I mean, one day won’t hurt, mate.” He puts the thing he was holding down on the bed-- a jacket, it seems, most likely for Wilbur since Phil already has his own-- and he holds his hands out, shrugging a bit in an offer of waiting here for a bit longer.

“I’m sure.” Wilbur nods, and Phil must see something in his eyes, because he doesn’t argue, and instead just smiles quietly at Wilbur and nods back, looking at Eret.

“I’ll make sure we rest frequently while traveling, don’t worry.” Phil says, Eret still frowning a bit, but leaning back in her seat with a quiet sigh.

“I suppose that’ll have to be enough. It’s either that or we tie Wilbur down, and I don’t think he’d stay down for long anyway.” Eret grins, Wilbur rolling his eyes.

“I have places to be.” Wilbur says, swinging his feet off the bed, giving a shooing motion to Eret. “I’ve lived through worse, believe me. A bit of aching in my bones won’t stop me, especially with something like this.”

“If you say so. You’re better now with food and water in you, so I guess it’s not too bad.” Eret hums, not entirely satisfied. “I still want to talk with you before you go, though, preferably alone...?” Eret trails off, turning her head to Phil with a slightly sorry look.

Phil just raises his hands up. “I’ll be just outside. I’ll ask Fundy to see if the horde has passed by now.”

Wilbur and Eret nod, and Phil walks off, out of the infirmary.

“So, what did you want to ask?” Wilbur asks, reaching for the jacket that Phil had left at the end of the bed, pulling it on and zipping it up. It’s clean and not worn, and Wilbur thinks that’s rather nice.

“I hadn’t really wanted to ask anything, more that I wanted to give a heads-up.” Eret pauses, seeming to be considering her words for a moment before continuing. “Phil is...intense, at times.”

Wilbur blinks. “Meaning?”

“I mean, he’s a good guy! He is, don’t get me wrong, he’s brought plenty of supplies and he’s risked his life non-stop just for us, but also if he gets into a sticky situation, he does become a bit, *ruthless*.” Eret says, Wilbur trying to process that for a bit. From what he’s seen, Phil does seem kind, calm, even, but everyone can have a different side to them in a world like this. “I’m just saying, so you don’t get surprised by Phil shooting someone in the foot over a vague threat or something.”

Wilbur raises his eyebrows. “Has he done that before?”

Eret grimaces a bit. “He’s done a lot before. He’s told me some of it, and honestly it’s a bit much, and I just want you to know before going with him, that he does have a lot of blood on his hands. I mean, you’re safe with him, for sure, especially if you both become good friends, but he has- gone through a lot. And he’s done things even I wouldn’t be able to look at, and believe me, I’ve seen some shit. Especially being the local doctor.”

“Oh.” Wilbur gives as a response, trying to think. He really doesn’t know Phil, doesn’t know if the guy is a full-on murderer or anything, but really, he doesn’t feel like it’s too important. So Phil is good at killing. That’s useful, in this world. That’ll get Wilbur farther, get him closer to Tommy. If Phil is dangerous, then that’s good, in his opinion, as long as Phil isn’t dangerous to him. “But he is a good man, in your eyes?”

“I’d trust him with my life.” Eret smiles. “He’s a good person, even with...did you know he’s even got a bit of a nickname, with the stuff he’s done?”

“Do tell.”

“We all kinda know it around here, but we don’t say it out loud in fear of being rude, I’m not sure of his opinion on it. But to any communities he’s ever visited, he’s also known as the Angel of Death.”

“The what?” Wilbur almost sputters. The name sounds a bit ridiculous, but Eret says it without a hint of a joke, and Wil doesn’t know how to take that. It sounds like a term you’d give yourself to try and be scary, or maybe even like a cult thing. “What could he have done to get *that* as a name?”

Eret huffs. “Once, Phil burnt down an entire settlement to ashes and killed the leaders there. They had enforced a rule of ‘survival of the fittest’, and they were throwing children and elderly out into the open, leaving them for dead. Phil went into the town, pretended to join, then destroyed it from the inside out.”

‘I don’t regret it.’ Eret remembers Phil saying, the two of them speaking late at night, over cups of hot chocolate, a rare thing, but a nice treat that Phil had brought back from travel. *‘I don’t regret any of it. They left children for dead, do you think I should’ve just let them have mercy, when **they** didn’t give any?’*

Wilbur’s eyes go wide with the new information, and Eret smiles a bit, turning her head to the side. “He what?”

“That’s just one of the things he did.” Eret waves a hand. “I told you, he gets intense at moments. But as long as you don’t run into any trouble, I don’t think you’ll have to see Phil do anything drastic.”

“Well, yeah, but *still*. Holy shit.” Wilbur laughs a bit. “I guess it’s good to know he’s capable?”

Eret shrugs. “He survives through hoards for a reason. There have been too many times he should’ve absolutely died, but he just- didn’t, and got out instead. At this point, there’s bets going around that he’s actually undead or something...” Eret grins, Wilbur snorting.

“Maybe.” Wilbur jokes. “I’ll keep what you said in mind. I’ll try to prepare myself mentally for any shit that comes up.”

Eret stands up with Wilbur, shaking hands with him. “I wish you luck. And also, keep this in mind, too, protect Phil as well. You leave him for dead, there will be a lot of angry people after you, just saying.” Her voice isn’t threatening, but it’s dead serious, and Wilbur doesn’t doubt the warning for a second.

“Noted.” Wilbur nods, and he goes to walk out of the infirmary, going through the door and finding Phil waiting off in the road, arms crossed as he looks up at the walls protecting their little town.

Phil turns his head as Wilbur walks up to him, and his face lights up with a warm smile. He shrugs off a backpack from his shoulders, giving it over to Wilbur. “Hey, mate. Everything alright?”

“Yeah, Eret just wanted to make sure I was fine.” Wilbur lies, not sure if he wants to bring up Phil’s habits of violence up just yet. “Said your goodbyes and everything?”

Phil snickers. “Both Fundy and Niki were crying while saying goodbye. Jack was emotional, too, and I said my goodbyes to Eret a while ago. You good to go?” He asks, eyebrows raised in a silent question, looking at Wilbur to see if he’s swaying in any way.

Wilbur does still feel the ache in his arms and legs, healing bruises, but he’s filled with a burning determination to keep moving, so he nods. “Yeah, I’m good.”

Phil nods, leading Wilbur along, the two of them walking up to the front gates of the walls, shouts being yelled out to open up the gates. There’s a loud creaking as they swing open, and Wilbur follows Phil outside, heart beating a bit faster than usual.

Chapter End Notes

looks at the BAMF Phil tag heh, you've got a storm coming

Thanks for reading!

Philza commits war crimes

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Do you need help with that?”

“No!” Tommy yells, from where he’s sitting beside the front door, intensely focused on his shoes in front of him.

Technoblade’s already suited up and ready to go, his mask secured over his face and his sword at his hip. Floof’s already gone out the door to run around in the hallway, and Technoblade holds back a snort as Floof zips by their doorway in a blur of white fur.

Tommy’s mostly ready, having changed out of his pajamas into better clothes and with Techno’s old jacket rolled up at the sleeves. All that’s left is for the kid to put on his shoes, and it’s taking longer than Techno had first thought.

“I got it.” Tommy insists, pulling at his shoelaces once again, unraveling what has to be the sixth attempt at tying them together. He had told Techno he was an expert at tying shoes. Techno is starting to think he may have fibbed a bit with that declaration.

“That’s the third time you’ve said that.” Technoblade responds, a slight teasing tone in his voice.

“And I *mean* it.” Tommy spits out, eyes narrowing as he yanks at his shoelaces once more, with such fury that Techno feels like they might snap. “Wilba says patience is key.” He adds, and Techno huffs.

“Really?”

“Uh-huh.” Tommy gives a vague nod, trying to work with his fumbling fingers so he can try and make a bow with the laces, like how Wilbur had once done for him. These shoelaces are defective. Evil, even. Tommy feels like these shoes are cursed. “I want my other shoes, these don’t work.” He declares then, leaning back with a slight pout.

“Do you actually know how to tie shoes?” Techno asks, a genuine question, and he kneels down in front of Tommy, tugging at the failed attempt of a proper knot. “And also your other shoes were practically falling apart, so no.”

“I do know how!” Tommy kicks Techno in the knee, Technoblade grabbing him by the ankle to avoid any more swinging feet. “Wil taught me, but that was a long time ago. My other shoes weren’t this hard to put on.”

“Your other shoes were velcro, I think.” Technoblade says back, tightening the laces and moving onto Tommy’s other shoe.

“No, they were red.” Tommy says. Or at least they used to be red. The amount of dirt and mud on them had practically made them brown.

“Velcro isn’t- Ok, you know what, look-” Technoblade pulls at the shoelaces, standing back up. “There. I’ll try and teach you how to tie your shoelaces later, we can just get going now.”

Tommy leans forward from where he’s sitting, staring at his shoes with curious eyes, and he nods up at Technoblade, seeming satisfied, before standing to his feet as well.

“Floof!” Techno calls, stepping to the side to let Tommy walk into the hallway, and then following after him while closing the door behind him. Tommy gives a little shriek at the dog that zooms past them, going towards the direction of the stairs. Tommy runs along, and Technoblade just walks with a bit of a rush, not wanting to be left behind.

“So where are we going?!” Tommy yells, pulling open the door that leads to the stairwell, turning his head back to Techno. “Can we go explore?”

“I need to patch up the gap you had gotten through earlier.” Technoblade explains, watching Tommy as he walks ahead with Floof, heading down the stairs. “I told you already at breakfast.”

“But what about *after* that?” Tommy stresses. “Can we go explore after? Wil says that exploring the place is good, because then you can find places to hide. Or we could find food.”

“I’ve already gathered any spare supplies that were in my territory.” Technoblade says, Tommy giving a huff of slight disappointment. “I’ve picked the buildings clean, you won’t find anything. It’s all in the storagehouse.”

Tommy pushes open the door to go out into the first floor, and soon enough they’re outside, Floof sticking by Techno’s side as Technoblade makes a beeline towards the storagehouse. Tommy follows at his heels with a bit of a jog. Techno is still walking a bit faster than usual.

“And there’s no need to hide.” Techno continues. “I already said, there’s no zombies here.”

“There’s zombies everywhere.” Tommy responds, like it’s simply just a fact of life. “Even in towns.”

Technoblade pauses a bit, slowing in his walk as he reaches the door of the storage house. His hands grab at the lock, but he doesn’t do anything with it. “Even in towns?” He asks slowly, Tommy humming.

“Me and Wilby were looking for a safe town, y’know? Because the last one had zombies.” Tommy explains, and something goes a bit cold in Techno’s chest. “The one before that had them too. Me and Wil had to run before the hoard got inside. That was a mess.”

“An infection broke out?” Technoblade asks, looking at Tommy. “Inside the survivor camps?”

“Someone got bit.” Tommy just shrugs. “Or at least that’s what Wilby said.”

Techno bites at the inside of his cheek to hold back a frown, although he remembers that Tommy wouldn't even see his pinched expression because of the mask he's wearing.

Whoever Wilbur is, him and Tommy must've been traveling for a while. Safe places are hard to come by in this world, Techno knows that. If you can't fight off any of the zombies that pass by, then it's even more dangerous to be out in the open. There's a quiet respect that Techno feels, for Wilbur having the courage to keep traveling with a kid in tow. That's a risk that could lead to anything going wrong.

Thankfully, Tommy seems to be a smart kid. Although, he's a bit too used to the apocalypse for Techno's tastes. He might be biased, with the way he's been living in safety and comfort for the past few months, but he honestly feels like the kid should just focus on being a kid. Being curious, being happy.

Technoblade *wants* him to be happy.

"Hey." Technoblade says gently, tilting his head a bit. "You know there's no way any zombies can get in here, right? I've killed all of them, and I've made sure they can't get in. I'm serious when I say this place is free of them."

Tommy's face scrunches up, his eyes squinting towards Technoblade as if he's told a blatant lie to his face. "This place is too big for you to have killed all of them." He tells Techno, and the way he says it almost sounds like he's challenging Techno.

Technoblade opens his mouth to respond, but he decides against it, and instead grins, unlocking the door to the storagehouse. "Alright, then. I'll show you something. First, come help me grab some stuff."

It makes sense for the kid to be skeptical. Logically, Technoblade knows that the idea of just him clearing out the entirety of these streets is kinda unbelievable. Even more so to a kid who's used to the amount of undead creatures walking around on a daily basis. Tommy might be a bit skeptical of Techno's abilities, but luckily, Techno has a very visual reminder that'll help with that.

The walls. Not the ones made out of wood and metal, no, the *zombie* walls.

Tommy only saw one, didn't he? Only one wall of those dead zombies, thrown on top of each other to make a pile of rotting corpses.

Technoblade has three walls made of zombies. Three walls, up to his chest, purely made of zombies he's picked off and shot and sliced to bits. It blocks off the street effectively, keeping anything from going in. It's a bit gross, and a bit unhinged, if Techno is going to be honest, but he's kept those there for a reason. It's a good warning to anybody to comes by. A warning of just how easily Technoblade can handle an entire hoard.

Both him and Tommy go through the storagehouse to pick up some supplies for the wall Techno is going to need to repair. Tommy holds the hammer and nails, and Technoblade lifts the wood he'll need on one of his shoulders. He grunts with the weight, and Tommy makes a little face as if he's mocking him. He can practically hear Tommy's voice saying 'I bet I could carry that'.

"What, you want to swap?" Technoblade drawls, raising an eyebrow, and Tommy shakes his head, holding the hammer and nails away from Techno as if he's going to try and take them.

"No, no, I think you've got it." Tommy says, quickly making his way ahead of Techno, walking outside onto the street as Techno follows.

"I do." Technoblade responds, following him out.

It's a slightly cold as Wilbur and Phil walk farther and farther away from the town they were in, and they go slow at Phil's insistence, with Wilbur not exactly being in full health. It's a bit annoying each time Phil suggests they rest and sit for a moment, but Wilbur knows the man means well. Wilbur still declines each offer, and instead insists he can keep on walking just fine.

Phil gives an easy shrug and a word of agreement each time Wilbur says no, and each time he looks over Wilbur like he's seeing something Wilbur isn't seeing. Wilbur looks at himself with a small frown, trying to spot anything unusual on his clothes, his jacket. He looks at Phil, tries to see if there's anything unusual there. Phil seems normal, though. He's got a long sleeve underneath his own coat, and there's a bloodstain splattered across his shoes and pants, but he looks like just some random survivor.

The hat on his head is fun, though. Wilbur wonders as to where Phil might've gotten that from.

Phil glances towards Wilbur again, before looking back at the road they're walking down, and an overwhelming curiosity rises up in Wilbur before he can even stamp it out.

"What?" Wilbur blurts out, before he's really thought it through.

"Hm?" Phil turns his head to him, raising his eyebrows.

Wilbur fumbles a bit to keep going, speaking slowly. "You keep looking at me weirdly. Is there something on my face, or are you just being wary?" Wilbur elaborates, tilting his head forward. It would make sense if Phil is just constantly making sure Wilbur won't try anything. You can never be too sure of anything with strangers. For all Phil knows, Wilbur could be planning to kill him later on. And for all Wilbur knows, Phil could be planning the same.

Wilbur wants to hope that isn't the case though. He needs a bit of good luck in order to find Tommy, and he prays the universe will grant him it.

Phil snorts. "No, mate. I know you won't do anything." He pauses for a moment. "Besides, I doubt you're in proper shape to even fight."

"I'm not hurt that badly." Wilbur mutters, picking at the bandages around his head. It really isn't that bad. So what if he has a slight headache coming on? So what if his ankle is starting

to ache and he's limping a bit? Wilbur's got it. "Then why do you keep *looking* at me?"

Phil stops suddenly in his steps, turning towards Wilbur to look at him again, eyes narrowing just the slightest bit with an expression Wilbur can't figure out, and he hesitates for a moment before speaking.

"You're a bit too skinny for comfort." Phil says, and that's nowhere what Wilbur thought he was going to say. He blinks at Phil in pure confusion, and Phil continues. "It could be the clothes, maybe. They hang a bit loose on you, but also, I'm just wondering, when's the last time you ate?"

"I had food back at the town." Wilbur answers, trying to keep walking, but Phil stays firmly standing in place, so instead Wilbur just leans a little to the side, crossing his arms over his chest. "You saw me eat."

"I mean before that." Phil presses. "They didn't find you in the best conditions, and I'm wondering how you were living before you got separated from your group."

"We had food." Wilbur answers dryly. There was food.

Just.

Not enough, sometimes.

The rations were fine, they were running low far too often, though, and the food had to be spread out over the days. Sometimes scavenging didn't bring back enough for everyone. Wilbur didn't care what the others did with their rations, he knew what he needed to do with his.

Wilbur can sleep with an empty stomach. Tommy should never need to go hungry.

Tommy's a growing boy. He needs all the food he can get.

"I've met far too many who didn't have enough food to get by." Phil says distractedly, as if he's remembering something. "I travel around a lot. I've met plenty of groups. The main thing I do these days is try to help out when I can. It's what I was doing back in the town."

"Eret had said you often brought back supplies for them." Wilbur says. "They also said you risked your life non-stop." Wilbur deadpans. He's a bit skeptical, to be honest, over Phil's behavior. Surely there's a catch or something. There's no way this man is just living day to day life with a goal to only to help others.

He feels a bit bad at not believing Phil's words and reputation right off the bat, but Wilbur's met the handful of people who swore they'd always help and always put others before them. Those people never seemed to follow through.

And with the 'Angel of Death thing' Wilbur had been told? There's got to be more to Phil than at first glance.

"I'm more..." Phil trails off, humming. "*Capable*, than most. I'm lucky. Zombie hoards aren't much of a roadblock to me, and hostile survivors aren't either. Whatever I can get, I try to get it to people who need it. I usually have enough to get by, so I don't need any more."

"Is that why you agreed to help me?" Wilbur asks. "You just wanted to help? Nothing more? I don't have much to give."

"I don't want anything from you, mate." Phil rolls his eyes. "Maybe just some company. Traveling alone gets boring, at times. Here, come sit, I'm tired."

"We should keep moving." Wilbur weakly protests, and Phil pays him no mind, instead going to sit down at the side of the road, then patting beside him for Wilbur to join. Wilbur goes to join him with a sigh. "Just for a few minutes?"

“Hm.” Phil doesn’t give a straight answer, and Wilbur huffs as the man pulls his backpack off his shoulders, zipping it open and looking through the bag. “I wanted to ask about Tommy.”

“What about him?” Wilbur answers, Phil pulling out what looks to be a granola bar. He holds it out towards Wil. “I- You can have that, that’s yours.”

“Either you take it or I’ll chuck it out on the street.” Phil grins, and there’s a mischievous little glint in his eye that makes Wilbur think he might not be joking.

“Why would you do that?!”

“One.” Phil just responds.

“Phil-”

“Two.”

“God, don’t count.” Wilbur says, grabbing the granola bar out of Phil’s hand. “What about Tommy? You wanted to ask about Tommy.” Wilbur continues, trying to move on from the slight embarrassment of feeling like he’s lost. That, and Phil’s giving a stupidly satisfied smile, and Wilbur rips the wrapper open with a bit too much force.

“What’s he like? I’m curious.” Phil asks, leaning his elbows onto his knees.

“He’s chatty.” Wilbur takes a bite of the granola bar. “Confident, a lot of the time. He’s always trying to act older than he really is, but he’s simply just a seven-year-old at heart.” He chews for a moment. “He means the world to me.”

Phil’s smile goes soft, and Wilbur means those words with all his heart. Tommy is everything to him. If there’s one reason he’s still kicking in this world, it’s for his little brother.

“It’s just you two?” Phil leans back, looking through his bag once more. Wilbur eyes him warily.

“We had a group.” Wilbur shrugs, scooting away from Phil just the tiniest bit. Phil better not go offering him another snack. “I’m hoping they’re still with Tommy right now.”

“And your parents? Family?” Phil asks. “Where are they?” He looks up from his bag, making eye contact with Wil.

“Where is anyone’s parents?” Wilbur answers, a bit bitterly, looking to the road. “They were gone long before all this shit. It’s just been me and Tommy for a long time.”

Phil doesn’t say anything for a long while, Wilbur finishing the rest of his granola bar in silence.

“You know how to shoot a gun?” Phil asks, and he holds out a pistol to Wilbur. Wilbur puts the wrapper to the side, wiping at his mouth, before taking it from him.

“Yeah.” Wilbur says. “I’ve used a gun before.” But not that often. His aim is a bit shit, actually. Usually, whenever he came across a zombie, he’d use blunt force with a bat, or he’d just run. Easier to evade rather than go for the kill. And he’s never liked the loud sound of a gunshot.

“Use it when you need to, then.” Phil hums, and Wilbur nods, shrugging off his backpack to put it away.

“Anything about you I should know?” Wilbur asks, sorta hinting towards what he had been told about Phil earlier. “Anything I need to keep in mind?”

“I’m a bit reckless.” Phil answers with a grin. “I’ll be truthful with that, I run head-first into a lot of things.”

“Eret had told me...” Wilbur trails off.

“Told you what?”

“Nothing.” Wilbur shakes his head, getting to his feet. Maybe now’s not the best time to talk about it. And to be entirely honest, Wilbur doesn’t really want to talk about it. He doesn’t really want to know. So maybe Phil is a bit ruthless in life-or-death situations. Wilbur doubts that’ll be a problem. “Can we keep moving? I think we’ve rested long enough.”

“What’d he tell you, mate?”

Phil doesn’t make a move to stand up, and he instead just looks up at Wilbur with a steady look. Wilbur bites at the inside of his mouth, and Phil waits.

“He said you’re a good person.” Wilbur gives. It’s true, it’s not what Wilbur had been meaning to say at first, but it is true. “And you seem to be.”

“I hope I am.” Phil laughs, standing up beside Wilbur. “I try my best.”

“Thank you.” Wilbur nods. “For, uh-”

“I haven’t done much yet, mate.” Phil pats Wilbur on the shoulder, then walks past. “Come on.”

Wilbur wonders for a moment if he should be more worried about his current travel partner, be more worried about said rumors. That little nickname was silly-sounding at first, but now Wilbur is a bit curious as to why that nickname would even stick. Phil is a good person, or at least seems to be. Wilbur hopes he’s also a good fighter.

He follows Phil.

It takes a while for them to make good distance, but they eventually approach near where Wilbur had been found, and Wil starts to recognize the streets, after being trapped in them for a while. The hoard that was here has passed, and it's eerily empty, with cars scattered around in the middle of the road.

Phil and Wilbur walk around the cars, Wilbur watching his feet for any undead that might be hiding underneath. Phil hardly seems concerned, but he then suddenly comes to an abrupt stop, Wilbur nearly running into him.

"Get down!" Phil whispers, yanking Wil down with him to crouch low, and Phil moves forward, peeking over the car with an upset look on his face. Wilbur kneels down beside him, looking towards what Phil's seeing.

There's people at the end of the street. A group of three guys, one holding a bright red axe, another with a bat over their shoulders. They seem to just be lingering, talking loudly amongst themselves, unaware that Phil and Wilbur have stumbled upon them.

Wilbur wonders if they can go around, but he knows that the place where he and Tommy had gotten separated is just up ahead. These people are just in the way.

"Ah, shit." Phil swears underneath his breath, and when Wilbur glances over, he finds a loaded gun in Phil's hands, making his heart jump. Wilbur kneels down lower, turning his head to Phil with wide eyes.

"You know them?" He asks, quietly. He must know them, if he's already regarding them as a threat. Wilbur really isn't up for a fight right now.

“I ran into them yesterday when I was searching for some medicine back at another town nearby.” Phil explains, looking around them both, then gesturing for Wil to follow as they both move silently to another car to hide behind. He speaks again when they’re safely hidden. “They’re rude as hell. Also, they don’t like me.”

Wilbur blinks. Narrows his eyes. “Should I ask why?”

“I might’ve- ah,” Phil tilts his head, sucking in air between his teeth. He doesn’t look at Wilbur, instead keeping his eyes at the guys still talking far up ahead. “I might’ve stabbed one of them in the shoulder.”

“You *what*?” Wilbur chokes out.

“I was searching for supplies.” Phil turns his head to Wil. “I found the medicine I needed, and I was planning on taking it back to the others.” Phil whispers. “They wanted half, but they sure as hell weren’t asking. When I said no, they tried taking it, tried killing me when I fought back. So I stabbed someone in the shoulder, and made a run for it. Luckily, I lost them in the middle of a hoard. I didn’t think I’d be seeing them again.”

“But now they’re here,” Wilbur continues. “In the way of where we need to go, and they don’t like you.”

“I would’ve been nicer to them had I known.” Phil says.

“Would you really?” Wilbur asks.

“Nah, probably not.” Phil huffs. Wilbur appreciates the honesty. “Look, I bet we can sneak past them. Just, move quietly. Follow me. If anything goes wrong, I’ve got you.”

Wilbur frowns, but he sighs, and nods. “Alright.”

Phil nods back, and he moves quickly and silently, weaving through the cars to make their way around the little group in the middle of the street. Wilbur follows along, trying his best to not fall behind or to make much noise. Phil still hasn't put away that gun, and Wilbur wonders if he should be reaching for his.

They stop behind a car, and Wilbur can hear the other survivors talk. They're only a few feet away, and Wilbur breathes in deep, Phil glancing behind him, before moving again.

They're going slowly, now. Car to car, staying hidden behind cover. Wilbur's heart slams in his chest as he becomes incredibly aware of how loud his footsteps are, his breathing, and he holds his breath on the next time Phil moves.

Wilbur follows, holds his breath, lets it out once they're behind cover. He holds his breath, lets it out. He tries to move quickly, quietly, holds his breath-

"Hey!" Someone yells out, just as they're behind another car again, and Wilbur presses his back up against the car, eyes wide towards Phil. Phil just seems annoyed, and he holds his gun with both hands, only making Wilbur feel even more panicked. "Who's there?!"

Wilbur can hear how close they are, can hear their footsteps, and he tries to peek around the car, jolting back the moment he sees a glimpse of someone there.

"I can see you!" They yell. Phil holds a hand to Wilbur's shoulder, scoots forward like he's about to jump up and shoot, and Wilbur takes a deep breath in. These people don't like Phil, right?

It'd be best if they didn't even know he was here, then. He lets the deep breath out.

"Okay, okay!" Wilbur yells, rushing out from cover before Phil can act, and he ignores the way Phil tries to grasp at the back of his jacket, failing to pull him back. "Don't shoot!"

He stands up straight, hands raised up into the air, and he hates the feeling of three pairs of eyes on him. Wilbur takes a mental note on all three of them. The one with the bat is the one that's the closest. The one with the axe is a bit farther, but still too close for comfort. The third person is leaning up against a car, bandages underneath their shirt. Wil reckons that's the one who got stabbed by Phil.

"I'm just trying to pass by." Wilbur says, waving his hands towards the direction him and Phil were trying to go. He spares a glance at Phil, and Phil's looking up at him with a worried expression, eyes flicking around as if he's trying to figure something out. He still has a hand stretched out for Wilbur, but thankfully, it's out of view. "I didn't mean to disturb you all..."

"And where are you going?" One of them ask. It's phrased less as a question and more of a jab, but Wilbur just shrugs.

"Places." He holds his arms out a bit. "Look, I'll be out of your hair if you just let me go. I don't want trouble."

Wilbur keeps his composure calm, keeps his voice steady. He pretends like he's not panicking internally, and instead uses his words to his advantage, tilting his head forward.

"I'm just passing through here, I wanted to get through this town. I was hoping for no conflict. Could I just-?" Wilbur takes a careful step back, and he isn't stopped.

The other survivors in front of him seem to be considering just letting him go, and Wilbur takes another careful step, then another, and-

"Wait, hold on." The one with an injured shoulder speaks up, waving a hand. "What's in that bag of yours?"

Wilbur's heart drops a bit. "Supplies for the road."

"Give it over."

Wil gives a glance at Phil, and his throat goes dry when he sees that the man is gone. He's left him behind? Just like that?

The one with the bat looks to their friend, and there's an exchange of nods and a silent communication. Wilbur takes another step back and considers running as the person takes a step towards him.

"I need this." Wilbur says.

They hold a hand out towards Wilbur, clearly asking for the backpack. "Maybe we'll let you go if--"

A bang rings out, Wilbur flinching and looking up with surprise as he finds the man in front of him has had his hand shot with a bullet. Wil quickly takes the distraction, and runs for cover, just as one of the survivors reaches for their gun and fires at Wilbur.

"You *fucker*!" The person with a bat screams, dropping said bat onto the ground. "Who's with you?! Who the fuck did that?"

"Get over here!" Another yells, and Wilbur runs low, flinching as multiple gunshots ring out, a few hitting the cars and flying over his head.

There's more yelling, and Wilbur ignores it, tries to get farther from them so he can lose them. Windows shatter from where they're being hit with gunfire, and Wilbur covers his head with his hands, breathing hard as he moves quickly, stopping in place suddenly to try and stay behind cover.

Footsteps come towards him, but he hardly hears it with the commotion happening far off. There's still gunfire happening, but it's not at him, and Wilbur wonders what the hell Phil is doing.

He goes to move again, hoping the attention is off him, and someone steps right in his way.

Wilbur looks up just in time to get kicked backwards in the chest, and he finds that it's the person with that red axe who had gone after him. He kicks his legs to scoot back as the axe gets swung down, and he nearly loses a foot, thankfully backing up in time.

"Wait, wait-!" Wilbur holds his hands up, trying to back up more, and he sits up on his knees to turn his back and run away, only for a hand to grab at the back of his hood, yanking him hard enough for his collar to practically choke him. He gets dragged across the ground, his back feeling the rough texture of the road scratch against it. "Let go of me!" Wilbur chokes out, kicking and grabbing behind him, nails scratching at the hand holding onto him. "Fucking- LET GO-!"

There's the ring of a single gunshot, and the hand falls away. Wilbur looks over just in time to see the axe slam into the ground, having fallen from the person's hand, who's-

Now dead on the ground. With a bit of blood coming from their forehead.

Wilbur won't lie, he feels just a tad sick. He's mostly relieved, though.

Phil lowers his gun from where he had been standing across, and he runs over with a rush as Wilbur sits up, coughing with a hand hovering over his throat.

"Wilbur!" Phil calls, Wil lifting his head up to him. "Are you alright? *Shit*, I had hoped I caught the attention of all three, I didn't think one of them would go for you." He kneels down beside Wilbur, checking him over and poking at his back. Wilbur bats his hands away.

"I'm fine." Wilbur clears his throat. For a moment, he hadn't thought Phil could actually come back. "He just dragged me across the street. Nearly got my foot fucking chopped off."

Phil laughs, keeping a hand resting on Wilbur's shoulder as he leans to the side to grab the axe that was responsible for Wilbur's near death. "Yeah, this thing is handy." He holds the

long handle with both hands, looking over the blade for a moment before holding it out.
“Here.”

Wilbur shakes his head. “I’d rather get that bat the other guy dropped.” He’s used a bat before. He’s used to that.

“This is a bit more effective, though.” Phil offers, pushing it at Wilbur again. “A bat is less deadly. Just take the axe.”

Wilbur holds it with a exasperated face, and he huffs out a big sigh, Phil standing up and looking around.

“Besides, I think I lost the bat. I kicked it under a car. Can’t remember which one, though...” Phil frowns, tapping the end of his gun to the car beside him.

“Did the other guys run?” Wilbur asks, going to get up, Phil holding out a hand for him. He takes it, and Phil pulls him to his feet.

“They’re not much of a worry.” Phil answers, looking behind to the person he had shot dead. “Are you really alright? He didn’t hurt you?”

“I just got dragged.” Wilbur mutters. “I’m okay, for the most part. That went to shit.”

Phil snorts. “It did, didn’t it?” He looks ahead. “Should we rest, or keep moving?”

“Keep moving.” Wilbur immediately says.

Phil grins, walking along, Wilbur right at his heels.

He doesn't notice the two other bodies on the ground with bullets in their heads.

Chapter End Notes

Wilbur: so obviously I'm not doing well in the apocalypse-

Phil: You need help? Need food? Need a dad-[GUNSHOT] *lowers gun* that zombie was going towards you, anyway so-

Big thanks to Elliot, who made really cool fanart and gave the inspiration for Wilbur's axe (which will be his weapon from now on)

Go follow them on twitter!! @elliotshtutp they make incredible art!

Thanks for reading

"I'm not attached" says Techno, the big liar

The gap in the wall is actually smaller than Techno thought.

He had assumed with Tommy having gotten through, that it would be about the kid's size, but it's actually fairly small, and in order for Tommy to get through, he would've needed to crawl across the dirty ground to do so.

Technoblade isn't sure how to feel about that.

"Are you sure this is the one you came through?" Techno asks, the hammer hanging loosely in his hand as he kneels down beside the gap. He pushes against the wood that had come loose, the cause of an opening in his walls, and he frowns behind his mask as he pulls it away, the wood easily coming off. This one had been falling off for some time, it seems. Maybe Techno should be checking his other walls for weak spots, now.

"Yeah!" Tommy answers, distracted with Floof, him and the dog running around in circles behind Techno. "Get over here, come here-" Tommy says to Floof, hands outstretched to the dog that keeps running in circles around him. Techno hopes they'll both tire each other out, because he doesn't want to run after a hyper 7 year old sprinting down the street.

Techno watches the two of them run and play for a bit, Tommy squealing as Floof zips around out of his reach. He turns back to the task at hand, and works on repairing the small hole, hammering nails into the wood. The bang of it rings out, and after a few minutes, there's a returning bang on the other side of the wall, slow and joined with an undead groan.

Technoblade pauses, listening to the zombie on the other side trying to get through the wall, its fingernails scratching across the surface as it tries to go towards the source of the sound. The wall hardly even creaks with the zombie's efforts, and Techno just gives a quiet sigh, hoping the thing won't linger. It'd be a bit annoying for it to stay there even after Techno's left.

Techno glances back at Tommy to check on him, and he blinks at finding that Tommy has gone still.

The kid is crouched down with wide eyes, his hands held tightly over his own mouth, as if he's trying to not make a single sound. Floof keeps nudging his snout into Tommy's side, and Tommy practically ignores the dog, and instead just waits, not quite scared, but definitely on guard.

"It's not going to get you." Technoblade says softly, Tommy blinking at him without much of a response. The kid doesn't seem terrified, so that's good, Techno doesn't need to be calming him down, but he acts as if the zombie will be crashing through the wall at any moment if he moves too suddenly. He acts wary.

Techno wonders if that's a leftover habit from traveling outside. He's since lost the fear of being heard, and he doesn't ever need to hide, but Tommy and his group must've done that too many times to count. Why wouldn't they? Sometimes, when the hoard comes, all you can do is hide and wait for it to pass. Most people wouldn't have the drive to fight it head-on, like Techno might.

"I think it's just one stray zombie." Techno continues, after a solid minute of silence. "And it won't be getting through anytime soon."

Tommy pulls his hands away from his mouth, holding his palms to the side of his face, but he doesn't say anything, lips held shut. Technoblade looks at the wall, hears the zombie on the other side, and he taps his hammer against the wood, practically beckoning the thing on the other side to come closer. It slams its rotting hands on the wood in response, and Techno's hands twitch to reach for his sword. Habit.

"We should go back." Tommy whispers across the road, crawling forward to Technoblade, and Techno turns his head back to him. Floof stays close to Tommy, still trying to stick his snout into the kid's face, but Tommy just pushes the dog away and pays it no mind. "To the house?"

"It's an apartment." Technoblade corrects, checking that he's secured the gap properly, then standing to his feet. "And we're alright." He reassures, tapping the hammer against the wall again.

“Don’t do that!” Tommy whispers, still crouching down low. “You’re going to make it want to come in.”

“It’s not going to get in.” Technoblade says, walking over to Tommy and crouching down to his level, making sure to have the kid looking directly at him. “And even if it did, it wouldn’t last a minute here. Do you know why?”

Tommy blinks up at him, a hand hovering over his mouth again, but he lowers it with a curious face. “...why?”

“Because I would kill it.” Technoblade answers, honest and blunt.

Tommy gives a quiet puff of air that might’ve been a laugh. “You said yesterday you’ve never killed a zombie before.”

“I lied.” Techno grins a bit behind his mask. “I’ve killed a *lot* of zombies to make sure this place is zombie free. I can handle a few more, if need be.” He stands back up to walk over to where he’s left the box of nails on the ground, tucking them away in his pocket, and pulling at the new piece of wood to make sure it really is secure. His back faces Tommy, but he still talks to him again. “Where do you think the zombies that used to be in here went? It’s empty, right?”

“That’s because they’re hiding.” Tommy says, a bit louder than a whisper, but still careful.

“And where do you think they’re hiding?” Techno asks.

“In the buildings.” Tommy nods. Technoblade looks at him again with an amused face. “They come out at night, don’t they? That’s why it’s all empty here during the day.”

Techno sighs, holding back the small urge to laugh a little. He walks over to Tommy and offers a hand to help the kid up. Tommy takes it, Floof circling around their feet, and Techno doesn't comment on the way Tommy goes to step behind him when the zombie at the wall lets out another undead groan.

"The buildings are empty." Technoblade reassures. "When I got here, I looked through all of them and made sure to move the zombies out into the street. Then I got rid of them. I killed each and every last one."

"No you didn't." Tommy immediately says, face scrunching up into disbelief. "You're lying. The city has *hundreds* of zombies, Wilby told me."

"Well." Techno shrugs. "There *were* hundreds of them. I killed them."

"And you probably missed some."

"I didn't."

"Bullshit." Tommy sings, and Techno scoffs. "You're just keeping them somewhere, then."

Technoblade pauses, nodding a bit. "I am." He says slowly, and Tommy's face shifts into slight surprise that he was correct, and then his face turns into something smug. "Want to go see where I put them?" Techno asks, already walking towards the direction of where he knows the zombie wall is.

"I knew it." Tommy says, eyes wide, quickly following at Techno's heels. "You were *lying*, there's no way you killed them all! You were just hiding them."

"Hm." Technoblade walks down the street, smiling from behind his mask. "Sureee."

Tommy still looks incredibly satisfied with himself, and he marches along next to Techno with a smug little smile. Floof runs ahead of them both, and for a moment, Tommy looks like he wants to run along, but instead he sticks to Techno's side, calling Floof and trying to get the dog to run back to him. The dog doesn't listen one bit.

Technoblade takes note of the street around them, looking at the run-down buildings and the few scattered cars that are still around. Tommy's talk of zombies has revived a quiet paranoid part of him, and he rests a hand on his sword, wondering if maybe, there could be just one single zombie he missed, just shuffling around in one of those buildings.

He quickly waves away the thought. Yeah, right. Techno spent weeks clearing out these streets, clearing out his home. He knows for a fact he was *very* thorough with killing off the undead in his streets, all because he wanted peace of mind when he could finally just settle down and sleep.

He worked hard to make his home safe. He worked hard to make it so there was no more threat, no more danger of getting bitten or torn apart or killed.

He will keep it that way. And he will make sure it stays that way, if not for him, then for Tommy, because out of the two of them, Tommy deserves somewhere safe.

Tommy deserves better, he thinks.

Techno wonders when exactly he became so willing to give so much for a random kid.

Tommy's really not a random kid though, isn't he? Now he's a kid Techno's gotta take care of, for who knows how long. There's probably some level of care that goes into that.

Technoblade isn't attached though.

He's not.

Glancing over at Tommy, who's miserably failing at whistling Floof over, Techno feels something in his chest *squeeze*.

Not attached.

"Right around here." Technoblade says, pointing a finger ahead to the street corner, where he knows one of the walls is at the end of the road. Tommy lifts his head with an apprehensive look, a flicker of fear flashing across his face.

"This is where the zombies are?" Tommy asks, grabbing at Techno's sleeve, then his hand, holding on loosely around Techno's palm as he stays walking beside him. Technoblade doesn't comment on it. "They're quiet."

"Yeah." Technoblade actually laughs a bit this time, curling his fingers around Tommy's smaller hand and tugging him gently around the corner of the road. "That's because they're dead."

Tommy's eyes go wide the moment the street is in view, and his steps come to an abrupt halt, a small gasp coming from him.

An entire wall of dead, rotting zombies. They're sorta intact, and completely dead with no chance of coming back, piled onto each other to block off the end of the road. There's no undead groans or half-alive bodies trying to escape from the pile, they all just sit there, killed off months ago by Techno's sword.

It's...kinda gross, if Techno is going to be honest. He's used to the guts and gore at this point, but that doesn't take away the inconvenience of a rotting body staining his roads.

Tommy stands very still, maybe in a bit of a shock, and he lets out a little scream when Floof suddenly barks, making the kid jump and latch onto Techno.

“Floof, you know those are already killed.” Technoblade sighs, Floof still giving a quiet growl, and barking again. “Go, then, look for yourself.” Techno says, gesturing forward to the wall of bodies, and Floof goes running, barking again and again, before coming to a stop and just growling very close to the rotting corpses, as if he’s trying to threaten them to not dare move.

He’s trying his best, Techno thinks. Floof doesn’t like zombies, dead or alive, although Techno doesn’t think it’ll be that effective for the dog to growl incessantly at a rotting corpse that won’t be moving again.

Techno turns his attention to Tommy, who’s frowning at the killed zombies with a pinched face. “See?” Techno says, Tommy looking up at him, arms still held around Techno’s waist. “How many do you think that is?”

Tommy’s face scrunches up into something displeased. “Two hundred.”

“Maybe.” Techno hums. “I lost count, honestly.”

Tommy looks back at the dead zombies with a wary glance, tightening his hold around Techno. He’s not that close to them, and Techno says they’re all dead, but how can he be sure? Before, when he was with Dream, they hadn’t gotten too close to the wall, with the chance of some of the zombies going after them, and also with the problem of Tommy absolutely refusing to go near it when he realized it was made of zombies.

According to Techno, the wall should be perfectly safe, although Tommy still feels hesitant on the way Floof is awfully close to the rotting zombies, growling and barking at them.

He’s not scared. He isn’t! He just- it’s gross, that’s all. So, he doesn’t want to go near it.

“Want to get closer?” Techno asks, and Tommy’s head snaps up towards him, eyes wide. He shakes his head frantically. “Let’s get closer.”

“No, no-! Hey! No!” Tommy tries to pull Techno away, Technoblade just walking right ahead towards where Floof is. Tommy lets go, standing behind, and Technoblade turns around, taking a few steps backwards. “Isn’t it dangerous?!”

“They’re all dead.” Technoblade reminds. He shrugs with his hands raised up. “I mean, if you don’t want to go near it, that’s fine...”

“No, I can!” Tommy yells, taking a brave step forward, then taking two tiny steps back. “I can. I just don’t want to, is all.”

“That’s fine, then.” Techno nods. “We can go back-”

“No!” Tommy refuses. “I’m gonna go see the zombies up close.” He insists, crossing his arms in front of his chest with a big huff. Even with his declaration though, he doesn’t move.

Techno snorts. “You don’t have to.”

“I can!”

“I’m sure you can.” Tommy narrows his eyes towards Techno with his response.

“I’m gonna.” Tommy marches forward, until he’s side by side with Techno, and he stares at the wall of zombies with a deep frown. “*Hmmm-* Yeah, I’m gonna do it.”

A moment passes.

“Well, you’re just standin’ there.”

“I’m- Don’t rush me! That’s rude.” Tommy waves a finger at Techno, Techno rolling his eyes. “I got it. I can do it.”

“You really don’t have to.”

“Yeah, I’m gonna go- I’ll kick one! In the head. I’m gonna kick one in the head.” Tommy says, taking a few steps forward, then stopping again, and running back to Techno’s side. “You don’t have to just stay there, come on!” He yells, pulling at Techno’s sleeve.

“I’m sure I could watch you kick a zombie from here.”

“No, you can’t. Because- Because you’re old-”

“*What-*”

“And your vision is bad.”

Technoblade scoffs, pulling his arm away from Tommy’s grip, crossing his arms. “It is not.”

“Oh, oh, I see!” Tommy says suddenly, clapping his hands together. “You’re *scared*! You’re scared of the zombies.”

Techno blinks. “Yes, I’m terrified of them.” He says dryly.

“Then you are so very lucky that you have me as a friend, because I am so brave.” Tommy nods, looking confident, and Techno has to bite his tongue to not outright laugh at that one.

“Yeah?” He grins behind his mask. “You’re the bravest, I bet.”

“I am, I am!” Tommy’s face lights up, and he nods in agreement. “So, I’ll walk with you, since you’re so- so scared of the zombies. I’m such a good friend.”

Techno tilts his head to the side with a smile. “Alright. Go ahead, then, I’ll walk behind you.”

Tommy’s face goes a bit sour. “Uh- No! Because you might chicken out, so-” He reaches out to Techno, grabs at his hand again and this time holds on tight. “Okay! Now we go.”

“Alright then.” Techno waits, and Tommy stares at the wall, face so serious that it feels as if it’s a staredown. “Are we gonna walk, or?”

“I’m giving you time to prepare yourself.” Tommy says very calmly, and Techno hums.

“Ah, of course.” He squeezes Tommy’s hand. “Thank you, how thoughtful.”

“Mhm-hm.” Tommy nods, biting at his lip as he stares ahead.

Technoblade gives a light sigh, then starts walking, pulling Tommy gently along with him. “Come on.” Tommy doesn’t say anything in response, only tugging at Techno’s hand with wide eyes, sticking to his side.

They don’t go too close to the wall, mostly because Techno’s sure that Tommy will immediately back out upon doing so, and also, the smell is horrid. Rotting corpses tend to be like that.

“Here’s good enough.” Techno says, keeping a good distance away from the zombies. Tommy can see how tall it is compared to him, but he can’t pick out the gross details from here, and Techno thinks that’s acceptable.

Tommy holds a hand over his mouth, leaning into Techno’s side with a grossed out noise. “Ew.”

“It is kinda gross.”

“*Ew.*” Tommy says again, slightly muffled behind his hand. “You’re cheating. You have your mask, I bet you’re not even smelling it.”

Technoblade raises a hand to said mask, and after a second of hesitation, he goes to pull it off his head, instead giving it to Tommy, pulling it over his face. Tommy pushes at it to keep it in place, the mask being too big for him. “There. Now it’s fair.”

“Do I look intimidating?” Tommy asks, tugging at where he’s holding onto Techno’s hand. “I bet I do. Even more than you.”

Tommy’s curls are a mess, having been disturbed from pulling the mask over his head, and from Techno having not thought to brush it for him this morning. The mask is loose, practically falling off, and his eyes are squinted up at Techno, a weak attempt for a glare.

Techno’s heart *squeezes*.

“You look very, very intimidating.” Techno says, and the way Tommy’s face lights up in smug satisfaction, it makes Techno give a fond smile.

"Don't worry, son, I've got some arson for ya"

Phil and Wilbur are able to make good distance through the streets, with only a few stray zombies to pick off. The scuffle from before didn't seem to attract too many of the undead, and Wilbur is glad for that. Phil kills each and every zombie that comes near, but he's put away his gun, at Wilbur's insistence. Instead, he uses the very axe he gave to Wil earlier, slamming the sharp edge of it right into zombies' skulls.

Wilbur gags a bit internally with each kill. Phil is efficient and quick about it, but it doesn't change the fact that it's gross.

At one point, Wilbur gets ahead of Phil, eager to find the very street he was in before he got separated from Tommy. The buildings are familiar here, Wilbur knows them from running through here to try and escape the hoard.

The zombie hoard that was here before is long gone, having moved along to somewhere else. Wilbur hopes that it stays far, far away. He would hate to be trapped in these buildings a second time, with the echoing groans ringing outside as a constant reminder that the dead wanted to tear him apart.

Wilbur speeds up his pace as he walks down the road, head turning left and right as he scans the buildings, checks the street signs. He rests a hand on one of the cars in the middle of the road, and he sees nothing for as far as he can see.

Not a single soul, not a single survivor, and not a single sign that Tommy made it out okay.

There's a plummeting feeling in Wil's chest that makes him lean a bit more against the car, but he moves past it, forcing himself to keep walking, pacing around the area with a wary eye, as if Tommy will pop out from the buildings at any moment now, ready to run into Wilbur's arms.

“Wil.” Phil calls out, as Wilbur backtracks for the fourth time, stepping onto the sidewalk and then onto the open road, turning around and looking up and down the street. “Wilbur.” He calls again, Wilbur pausing in his steps to grab tightly at the front of his shirt. “Mate, you’ve been pacing around in circles.”

Wilbur doesn’t answer him, but he’s stopped moving, and he instead just looks around, one more time, eyes wide with careful hope and slow disappointment filling his lungs.

God, how he remembers the fear thrumming through his veins, just a few weeks before, narrowly escaping death. Undead hands grabbing at his sleeves, Tommy screaming out his name, ignoring their unspoken rule of staying quiet around hoards, because he couldn’t care less if the zombies were going to come closer, Wilbur had disappeared.

Wil had needed to run away, he had needed to run to safety, but in doing so, he ran from Tommy, and in doing so, he’s-

“Wilbur?” Phil asks, closer up behind him, yanking Wilbur right out of the crushing guilt and fear. “Hey.” He says, gentle and careful, like Wilbur is something that’s about to shatter. Wil turns his head down the street, wiping his palm against the corner of his eyes.

“This is where I lost him.” Wilbur says quietly, staring up at the nearby street sign. He remembers that day nearly vividly, because he repeats the moment over and over in his head. The whole time, hiding away from the horde, trying to survive, he had simply just been thinking of what he could’ve done better, what he might’ve been able to do, instead.

Part of him wishes he would have just killed his way through those zombies, made a bloody path straight to Tommy.

Part of him knows he would have never been able to, though. It's better for him to have been separated from Tommy rather than to have been killed in front of him. With this, there’s still a chance Wilbur can reunite with him. Even so, it doesn't make it any less painful.

Phil reaches out to Wilbur's arm, giving a small squeeze. “Sorry.” He simply says, and Wilbur holds back the burning feeling of a sob wanting to rise up. He chokes it down, and shakes his

head, holding out a hand towards Phil for the axe in his hands. Phil gives it over, and the weight of a weapon is comforting in Wilbur's palms.

"The hoard that was here before has already passed, so that's good for us." Wilbur says, ignoring the slight shake in his voice. "I know the vague direction of where they might've gone after we got separated, but it's nothing definite..." He trails off, biting at the inside of his cheek.

"Why don't we camp here for the night?" Phil asks, tilting his head up towards the sky, where the sun has slowly started to set, light fading from the roads. "Maybe you'll find a clue of some sort as we rest."

Wilbur gives an unconvinced huff, but he nods, simply because he honestly doesn't know where to go from here, and he just needs a moment to recollect himself and try to pull this all together. "Alright."

They choose a sturdy building for their shelter, searching through the rooms for any stray zombies, and thankfully finding only one. Wilbur takes care of it this time, slamming his axe into its head with a bit more force than necessary. He hacks at the thing with a hefty wing, splattering blood all over the walls and floor, and chopping up the body into something pathetic.

It's gross, it's disgusting, and it's something Wilbur needed, because he feels just a bit lighter after, even with the blood on his shoes. Phil gives him a look of amusement, but he doesn't say anything, and Wil doesn't comment either. They simply go to pick a torn up room on the second floor, two windows facing out towards the street, giving them a good view of any oncoming threats. One of the windows is shattered, a bit of glass scattered on the floor, and there's a hole in the roof that lets Wilbur have a peek of the stars.

The ground is dirty and scratched up, the walls seem to be in the same condition, and all that's in the room is an overturned desk, a broken chair, and a small bookshelf to the side that looks like it's seen better days. This might've been some sort of office, before.

Wilbur sits down on the ground beside the wall, placing his axe to the side as Phil closes the door and drags the desk over to barricade it. When he catches Wil watching him with a tired look, Phil gives a bright grin and a shrug.

“Can’t be too careful.” Phil says, pushing the desk once more to make sure it’s in place, keeping the door firmly shut. “We should be fine here till morning.” Phil goes across the room from Wilbur and puts his bag down on the ground, choosing to lay his head on it and look up towards the ceiling with a calm expression.

“Yeah.” Wilbur pulls his knees up to his chest, resting back against the wall with his head tilted up, eyes glued onto the window. The sunlight is slowly slipping away from the town, and the room starts to grow dark with each passing minute, night approaching fast. Both him and Phil just rest in comfortable silence, Phil at one point taking the time to eat something, before going back to just laying down and humming quietly underneath his breath.

Wil busies himself with organizing everything in his backpack, and he tries to focus on how many bars of food he has, how much water he’s carrying. He adjusts his backpack and checks through all his pockets, eating a bit of food and drinking some water and trying to ignore the climbing fear in his throat.

The room is dark, with no source of light, and Phil goes quiet, his breathing being the only sure sign that he’s even there. It’s hard to make out his figure from across the room, and Wilbur tries to not let his hands shake as he zips up his backpack and puts it to the side. He tells himself he’s fine, and he takes the axe in his hands and holds it tightly, leaning back against the wall again. His heart beats loudly in his ears as he stares across towards the windows, trying to grab any sort of piece of light from the moon and stars outside. There’s a small gust of wind that blows through, but it’s not cold enough to make Wilbur shiver. Just a slight chill.

“Wilbur.” Phil says, Wilbur jumping so suddenly that he smacks his head against the wall, and he groans in pain as Phil gives out a small laugh. Wil squints towards Phil with a frown as he holds a hand to the back of his head. “You should get some rest, mate. We can keep moving at sunrise, unless you want to sleep in.”

“No, I want to keep moving as soon as possible.” Wilbur shakes his head, carefully placing down the axe beside him. “Sunrise is fine.”

“Alright.” Phil hums, seeming satisfied with that. They fall back into silence, and Wilbur listens to the very faint noise of Phil breathing.

A couple of minutes pass, and Wilbur's heart only seems to beat faster with each passing moment. The darkness in the room around him is nearly suffocating, and Wil can't help but curl in on himself and try to hide inside the sleeves of his own jacket. Logically, he knows this room is pretty safe from any zombies. This place is hidden away, the door is barricaded, and there's nothing to even signal that they're both in here.

Even so, Wilbur still feels like he's too vulnerable, too weak, and his fingers curl around the handle of his axe. There's a tight fear curled up at the center of his chest, and he knows that there isn't any sort of chance of him falling asleep any time soon. Not like this.

Wilbur smiles a bit to himself, but it's something that's a little bitter. How funny, for him to be surviving in the zombie apocalypse, to be getting by with everything he's witnessed and seen, and yet the thing that's keeping him up at night is the very night itself.

Wilbur, even with how sturdy he can be, is *scared* of the dark.

That's a silly fear to have, especially in the apocalypse, but he can't shake it off, and as much as he tries to tell himself he's alright, it doesn't take away the dread that sticks to his shoulders. He's tired, for sure, and sleep calls for him to lay down and rest, but his head screams that something bad will happen if he does so, and he can't feel safe with how dim it is inside this room.

He's not sure how much time passes, with him just staring into nothing, one hand on his axe as he stays wary, even while half asleep. But eventually, Phil moves from across the room, and Wilbur lifts his head up with a jolt, hearing Phil shuffle around, and then after a few seconds, stand up.

"...Phil?" Wilbur hesitantly asks, heart in his throat, a death grip around the handle of his axe.

"You're *still* up?" Phil answers, and Wilbur's shoulders relax just a bit. "Or did I just wake you up?"

“No, no, I-” Wilbur pauses. “I was just keeping watch.” He gives as an excuse, but it’s weak even to his own ears and Phil gives a quiet scoff.

“There’s no need for that.” Phil’s footsteps sound out from the side of the room, and Wilbur blinks with surprise as a lighter comes to life in Phil’s hand as he stands beside the bookshelf. “You can just rest- you probably need it more than I do, with your head and all. How’s that feeling, by the way?”

Wilbur stares at the small bit of fire held in Phil’s hand, the warm glow just barely lighting up Phil’s face as he grabs a few books off the shelves. Phil goes to throw the books across the room, beside the open window.

“It’s fine.” Wilbur says, holding a hand to the bandages around his head. “I’ve been feeling fine, at least.”

“That’s good.” Phil hums, throwing a couple more books until there’s a small pile. He then holds one book in his hand as he walks over to beside the window, and he kneels down beside the books, ripping out pages from the one he’s holding.

“What are you doing?” Wilbur asks, leaning forward with curious eyes.

“Making a fire.” Phil responds, throwing loose papers onto the pile of books, before lighting one of the pages and throwing it onto the pile, letting it catch and begin to burn. “It probably won’t last for the whole night, but it should be good enough to keep the room warm while we sleep, at least.”

Wilbur can’t help but stare as the light of the fire fills the room, and Phil himself is illuminated in front of the flames as he puts his lighter away, rising up on his feet and going to throw a few more books into the flames. Phil hums quietly under his breath as he gives his attention to the flames, and for a split moment, Wilbur looks at Phil and feels safe.

It’s there and gone, within a second, but it’s enough for Wilbur to let go of the axe at his side, and he slumps against the wall behind him with a yawn.

Phil turns his head to Wil. "You can go to sleep, mate." He says, giving a small smile. "If you want, I'll keep watch just in case."

"No, you don't have to." Wilbur shakes his head, looking down at his backpack and considering if he really should try and sleep while he can, with the fire keeping the dark away. "We should be fine."

"Goodnight, then."

"...goodnight, Phil." Wilbur says back, slowly and carefully, and he looks down at his backpack once more, then decides to lay down, resting his head against it. He keeps his back turned against the wall, and stares ahead at the fire for a little while, watching Phil sit back down at his spot. He doesn't go back to sleep, but he does take the opportunity to eat a snack, and Wilbur closes his eyes as Phil pulls open a wrapper, the crinkling sounding out against Wil's ears, along with the sound of the crackling fire.

Wilbur closes his eyes, trying to sleep, and trying to will away the worries in his head.

A few minutes later, something is thrown over him, adjusted over his shoulders, and Wilbur cracks his eyes open just a bit to see a glimpse of Phil walking back to his side of the room, his coat missing from his shoulders.

Wilbur doesn't think too hard about it, and just closes his eyes again, drifting off into sleep.

Jump in a puddle, it's good for your soul

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

If Technoblade is going to be entirely honest, he isn't sure how he ever got by in the zombie apocalypse without *this*. Without a little spawn of satan running around in his home, making everything somehow worse and better at the exact same time.

Techno is not a people person, he knows that much from before the zombies hit, and from after, with the rising conflicts with other survivors, from how much easier it was to be on his own, rather than join a group that always eventually ended in something fiery.

In the apocalypse, there's always going to be a bit of gloom and dread sticking to everything you do. How could there not be? Techno lives in an abandoned city that once held life, a place that was once crowded with cars, people, noise.

Now, it's just silent.

Techno has lived with silence for a long while since he started being on his own. Sometimes, he chases it away with a song playing on a radio, or his own voice speaking to Floof, a one-sided conversation that doesn't go anywhere. But then it'll always lapse back into the signature silence of the apocalypse, and Techno, being on his own, being a survivor, will live with that. He just has to adapt with that, in order to get by.

Although, now he's not so sure if he could handle it ever again.

Now, the good thing about Tommy is that he's a smart kid, seeming to be raised well in the apocalypse. Tommy knows when to be quiet, and when not to be, that much is true. He knows his way around hordes, he knows to be silent around zombies, and he knows that he needs to hold caution around the undead. Techno is glad for that, it makes it easier to protect him and it lessens his inner worries just a bit.

However, Tommy is still very much a kid, and that much shows with the way he chatters on and on when there's no present threat. He's a talkative kid, who doesn't seem to like silence. The moment it sinks in for him that this place is rather safe, with no zombies around for a while, it's like a dam has burst.

He will *not* stop talking.

It's kinda driving Technoblade insane.

Never in a million years will he *ever* tell Tommy to shut up, because that's just cruel to say to a kid, but he definitely does block out some of the ranting that Tommy gives towards his direction.

While it's annoying, it's also soothing, in a way. It's been so long since he's really spoken to anyone, and at the very least, Tommy tends to talk about interesting topics. Yesterday, he kept talking about frogs and how he once read about the poisonous ones in a book once. That was a good conversation, in Techno's opinion.

So far, it's been an entire week of Tommy residing in Techno's home. A whole week, a whole seven days of a seven year old following at his heels as he goes on his daily patrols and carries out his usual chores.

Techno's started to actually sleep consistently these nights. You tend to do that when there's a child who forces you to sleep at his side every time he goes to sleep. Before, Techno had a habit of staying late whenever he was working on projects, writing down in his journal. Now, he's got to rework his schedule around the kid.

Technoblade finds out that Tommy is like a barnacle when he's asleep. The kid can't sleep alone, so Techno worked with that, laying down beside him until he was sure the kid was sleeping. Except, then Techno would just give up on moving to the couch and always just shut off the lantern and rolled onto his side to go to sleep, because that's the easier option, and he's too used to sleeping in bed, he's not giving it up to a kid who's so tiny anyway. They have plenty of room, it's not an issue.

But then it is an issue, because Tommy is a demon with a lack of regard for personal space in the mornings, and Techno has woken up on three separate occasions to Tommy holding onto his arm like it's a personal pillow, drooling on him. And each time Techno has pulled away, Tommy will squint his eyes open with the most hatred filled expression known to man, and then pass out immediately after.

With each night, it's like Tommy keeps on gravitating towards Techno in his sleep, and at one point Technoblade did honestly consider just sleeping on the floor, because he can kill zombies, he can pull their rotting limbs from their bodies and put a bullet through their head, but he cannot handle Tommy being half asleep and curled up into his side like some sort of tiny-cat-animal-baby thing.

The point is, Tommy's a lot less annoying and more endearing when he's asleep and Technoblade is *weak*.

"Can't you just-" Tommy mutters out the rest of his sentence into Techno's sleeve, his fingers digging into the fabric. He's drowsy and half-asleep, and he's holding onto Techno like he's his personal pillow or something. Techno could pull away if he wanted to. He is perfectly capable of yanking his arm out of Tommy's grip and getting up from bed so he can start the day. "*Hmmmm* ." Tommy hums, seeming to give up on words.

Techno doesn't pull away.

"Say that again?" Techno asks, and there's a bit of delay with Tommy's answer, but he does repeat his words.

"Can't you just, just-" Tommy yawns, long and tired. "Skip walking and doing stuff?"

"Patrol is pretty important." Technoblade responds. "Routine is important, and I need to stay watching over the streets just in case-"

"Buuuut-" Tommy cuts him off, waving a hand with his eyes still closed. "You could not."

“...I could not.”

“Exactly.” Tommy nods, and then hums quietly under his breath, relaxing back into blissful rest, drifting back to sleep, only to then be rudely interrupted by Techno snorting, and pulling his arm away. “Bitch!” Tommy yells out, clearly squinting at Techno with a burning glare. “I’m *sleeping* !”

“You can go back to bed.” Techno shrugs, standing to his feet with his arms over his head as he stretches for a moment. “I have things to do.”

“But I was *sleeping*... ” Tommy despairs, face planting into a pillow with a sad noise.

“You can still sleep in?” Techno offers.

“No.” Tommy responds, sitting up abruptly with a huff. “Now I’m awake.” He frowns, not at all seeming too happy about that. Techno just scoffs with a fond emotion dancing around in his heart.

“Come brush your teeth, then.” Techno says, and Tommy will do so, but with an angry little face that wishes to be asleep, rather than be up *doing* things.

There’s a lot more noise, life, a strange type of domesticity that’s brought into Techno’s daily routine with this new child running around in his apartment.

For example: cooking.

Usually, Techno makes his food without even thinking too hard about it. It’s like second nature at this point, he has some of the recipes memorized, and he does it quickly, efficiently, and well. It’s not his favorite pastime, but it’s something he has to be good at, if he wants to have dinner. It’s not something he’s meticulous about.

However, with Tommy insisting on seeing every single thing that Techno is doing at the stove, dinner takes a bit more time these days.

The moment the smell of food rises up and out of the kitchen, Techno will hear small footsteps running his way, and it doesn't take more than a minute before Tommy is poking his head into the kitchen, a familiar stuffed cow in his arms, and Floof usually beside his ankles.

“What are you doing?!” Tommy screams, as if Techno is deaf, as if he's accusing him of some sort of crime, and Techno gives him a glance, steps away from the food for just a moment.

“Cooking dinner.” Techno responds, easy and simple, and Tommy's face scrunches up into something thoughtful, before he goes waltzing into the kitchen with absolute confidence.

Tommy will then demand to help, because of course, he must be included. (And according to him, he is a professional taste tester. Wilbur told him so.)

Techno doesn't exactly think Tommy is anything along the lines of a chef, but he does somewhat know how to handle a knife responsibly. That's enough for Technoblade to go searching for a little stool for Tommy to stand on, and he allows Tommy to help out with whatever tasks he can spare.

Tommy seems perfectly satisfied with chopping up vegetables and measuring cups of water, and Technoblade is satisfied with the happy little look on the kid's face when he shows Techno that he's ‘measured the best cup of water ever’.

Sometimes, Tommy will be allowed to stir the pot and swipe a quick taste while it's still cooking, and he seems to love doing that. (Although, the kid really does not have self control with food, even when it's burning hot. Technoblade always needs to blow on it before he hands the spoon over or else Tommy can and will just burn his mouth without a hint of hesitation.)

“Do we really have to put these in?” Tommy asks one day, a pile of half cut up carrots in front of him. He puts the knife down to the side so he can turn to look at Techno, holding up a piece of the vegetable. “I don’t like these.”

“They’re good for your eyesight.” Techno responds, glancing at a cookbook put to the side, reminding himself of the amount of salt he’s going to need.

“But they’re not even going *in* my eyes.” Tommy sighs, squinting at the carrot in his hand and then proceeding to slam it down on the cutting board as if the vegetable has personally wronged him.

Techno raises his head with a slightly amused face. “They don’t need to go directly into your eyes to help your eyesight.”

“I don’t want carrots in my eyes.”

“...They’re not going in your eyes, Tommy.”

“Then we’re not putting them in the soup!” Tommy declares, grinning wide, and Techno walks over to the cutting board, grabbing the pieces of carrots and proceeds to put them into the boiling pot on the stove as Tommy watches with a deep, upset frown. “I hate you.” He says, voice dry and flat.

“Eat your carrots.” Technoblade responds, and he will then repeat the same thing at the dinner table, ten minutes later. Tommy will, of course, respond with another angry frown and a look of disgust at the carrot on his spoon.

Other than the new helper in the kitchen that Techno has now acquired, he also now has company along with his usual patrols.

Company being Tommy complaining about walking a lot and also being bored as Techno counts his supplies in the storagehouse. Techno had given the kid a shelf to count up, but

Tommy seemed to lose count after fifteen and then proceeded to annoy Techno to no end with constant questions.

“Do you have drugs in here?” Tommy asks, leaning over Techno’s shoulder, Technoblade kneeling down on the ground as he takes note of the number of water bottles he has in this section. “Hardcore drugs.” He repeats, lowering his voice into something gruff.

“I have...medicine?” Techno answers, lifting his head to Tommy, who squints at him like Technoblade is lying to his face. “I have a good amount of medicine somewhere.”

“But what about *drugs* ?”

“Medicine is a drug.”

“Ohhh.” Tommy nods, stepping back and walking over to Floof, who lays splayed out on the floor without a single worry in the world. Tommy nods down at Floof, and Techno tries to resume his counting, only to then be caught off with Tommy saying- “So I bet you get high *all* the time.”

A few minutes later, Tommy is kicked out of the storagehouse to go play catch with Floof in the street. He had been a bit bummed that he could not talk about drugs with Techno, but Technoblade is just glad he was able to get most of his waters properly counted. Tommy is an effective distraction.

Tommy is an effective *talker* . Technoblade thinks that the kid honestly does just say what is on his mind all the time, because sometimes Tommy will blurt out sentences that don’t make all that much sense, and Tommy will laugh and seem confused with even his own words.

Personally, Technoblade has a slight headache from the nonsense Tommy spits out nearly every minute. It’s always either Wilbur this, Wilbur that, or something about Floof, or something about being the ‘Zombie King’ where he kills all the zombies and becomes king of everyone, or maybe just a few words simply about the weather.

At the very least, the lack of silence is a little comforting, and as annoying as Tommy can be, Technoblade is terribly fond of the new voice. It rings in his ears and carries on through the air, and Techno will lie awake at night, Tommy asleep beside him, and he can't help but wonder-

How could he have ever survived without this?

Without this company, this slight sliver of hope. Maybe he's just being sentimental, but there's something about Tommy and the way he chatters on and on, the way he runs like he's got no end in sight, the way he looks up at Techno with this bright, unbroken hope in his eyes. Technoblade's entire reason for surviving has always been spite, an unbroken momentum to keep going, and to not get killed.

Tommy quickly becomes a new reason, and Technoblade quietly tells himself he can't mess this up. This is a kid getting by in the apocalypse, separated from his brother who he no doubt misses. The least he can do, while taking care of Tommy, is make sure the kid is happy, safe, and reassured.

That's what he deserves, at the very least.

Tommy wakes up one night, yanked out of sleep from an apparent nightmare, something bad that leaves him sobbing and asking for Wilbur. He kicks off his blankets and throws the plushies off the bed, eyes wide and full of tears when Techno turns on a lantern at the nightstand.

Techno can't give Tommy his brother, but he can give his best attempt at a hug, and Tommy will take it, nearly slamming into Technoblade with a sob that makes him hold onto the kid just a little too tight.

"You're alright." Techno says, softer than he's ever been. "It's alright." He says, and Tommy cries, shoulders shaking as tears stream down his face and soak into Techno's shirt.

"I miss Wilbur." Tommy admits, voice shaky and honest. "I want Wil."

“He’ll be here soon.” Techno reassures, rubbing a hand up and down Tommy’s back. “He’s looking for you, remember?”

“No, no-” Tommy cries again, something broken and frail, and Techno wants more than anything to have it stop. He wants for Wilbur to hurry the hell up and get here already, just for Tommy. “I want him *now*, I want-” He breaks off in a gasping sob, burying his face into Techno’s shirt.

“Shh.” Techno tries to think past the growing panic in his head, a constant yelling of *‘the kid is crying, make it stop, oh god-’* “Do you want to talk about your dream?”

“There was- I was stuck, and a zombie wouldn’t let *go* of me-” Tommy chokes out, a burst of frantic words. “It was going to bite me, I was going to get *bit*-” He hiccups, voice wavering. “It wouldn’t let go of me, it wouldn’t-!”

“You’re okay.” Technoblade cuts in, trying to make the words as matter of fact as possible. “You’re safe. There’s no zombies here at all, you see?” Techno glances towards the dog resting in the corner. “Floof would’ve barked and woke us up if anything was here, okay?”

“I want Wilbur.” Tommy whispers, and Techno nods knowingly, holding him close.

Technoblade isn’t Tommy’s brother, but he can promise quietly to Tommy that no zombies will ever come near to harm him, and he can promise that the apartment they sleep in is safe.

He can carry Tommy to the kitchen, give him a cup of water to settle his nerves, and while that is enough for Tommy to calm down, it isn’t enough for Techno, because he’s still mostly in panic mode of having a child crying in his arms, so he tries his best to be somewhat comforting.

He paces slowly around in the dimness of the living room, looking out to the tiny little balcony that the apartment has, the glass screen door letting in the moonlight from outside. Tommy rests in his arms, his head resting against Techno’s shoulder and his arms wrapped

loosely around his neck. Techno hums quietly, a random song that he doesn't really know, and he just stays like that, holding Tommy until the kid dozes off, snoring softly over his shoulder.

"The things I'd do for you." Technoblade murmurs just under his breath, words pointed towards Tommy, but not really meant to be heard.

Eventually, Techno goes back to bed, and puts Tommy back underneath a blanket, resting peacefully once more. Techno sleeps beside him, and for extra measure, he lets Floof up on the bed so the dog can sleep beside Tommy's feet, as a small added reassurance if Tommy is to wake up again.

The morning has less sunlight than usual.

When Techno climbs out of bed (after detaching Tommy from his arm) he goes to check through the window to see why, and he finds that the sky has gone gray with clouds, not a single bit of clear blue in sight. It looks gloomy, cold, and Technoblade takes a minute to pull another blanket over Tommy's sleeping figure before he gets ready for the day. Floof stays sleeping at the kid's feet, and Techno is satisfied with that.

He pulls his hair into a ponytail as he walks out of the room, and he wonders about the possibility of rain. Rain is good, it means he could collect rain water, use it for something good, but also this time around he's got Tommy for the rainfall. He doubts the kid will be all that happy about being stuck inside all day.

It doesn't seem like the kid is going to have any other choice, though, because as Techno starts up breakfast, it begins to sprinkle outside, dots of water soaking the street bit by bit, with the rain getting stronger until it's a steady shower of water coming down.

The sound of it is nice, and Technoblade watches out through the window for a bit longer than necessary, looking at the water rush down the street, a few puddles forming here and

there. Hopefully, it'll lighten up enough for him to do a quick patrol. He's got a few jackets that do well against the rain, but he'd still rather not deal with the cold out there.

Floof comes running out into the living room as Techno turns away from the window, and he pats at Floof's fur as the dog jumps up on him, giving an expectant look as he rests his paws on Techno's thigh. Techno smiles, but doesn't immediately go to feed the dog, his attention instead being pulled to the yawning seven year old making his way out of the hallway.

"Good morning to you." Techno says, with a slight bit of surprise. Tommy doesn't usually wake up on his own, Techno's had to drag him out each time for the past week. "Feelin' productive today?"

"It's raining." Tommy says simply, like it's an obvious reason for him being up, and he blinks blearily at Techno like he's trying to figure something out, sleep still fading from his drowsy mind. "It's raining!" He says again, his face a bit brighter as he runs over to Techno.

He runs into Techno's side, arms wrapped around him as some sort of hug, and Technoblade rests a hand on Tommy's head, fond warmth curling up in his chest.

"It is." Techno says, pointing over to the screen door he had been looking through, and Tommy pulls away to go press his hands against the glass with wide eyes, staring at the rain with a slowly growing smile. "It's really coming down out there."

"Oh nooo, guess we can't go on a walk today." Tommy drawls, tilting his head back to glance at Techno, and Technoblade just rolls his eyes. "We do gotta go *out*, though."

"I thought you just said you didn't want to go walking?"

"Well, I don't want to go on *patrol* ." Tommy says, as if Technoblade should've just known that through reading his mind or something. "But we have to go outside! In the rain! Look at all the puddles."

Technoblade processes Tommy's words for a moment, and he's immediately then thinking about any raincoats he might have that could fit Tommy. "You want to play in the rain?" He asks, and Tommy looks up with a grin.

"No, *we* have to go play in the rain."

"And why do I need to go get soaked with you?" Techno asks, Tommy walking away from the screen door, making his way over to the kitchen with a bit of purpose in his steps. "You're the one who wants to be in the cold."

"Me and Wilbur used to dance in the rain all the time, back before the zombies." Tommy says brightly, his voice happy and excited. "Have you ever jumped in a puddle before?!"

"Well, it's...been a while, I guess."

"You need to jump in a puddle." Tommy points a finger up at Techno as he sits at the kitchen table. Floof curls up beneath his feet, resting beside his chair. "It'll make you less grumpy."

"I'm not *grumpy* ." Techno protests, crossing his arms with a huff, before realizing that just more or less proves Tommy's words right. "You're calling me grumpy, when you always make an angry face waking up in the morning?"

"That's because mornings suck." Tommy turns his head away with a small frown. It slowly melts away into something more content after a moment though. "Not this morning though! It's raining."

"It is." Techno nods, going to fetch breakfast.

"Can we go out in the rain?"

"If it's still raining after you're done eating, then maybe."

“*If* it’s still raining?!” Tommy repeats. “It’s going to rain all day, isn’t it?!”

Techno shrugs with one shoulder as he puts down a plate in front of Tommy. “I don’t know. Probably? It is pretty cloudy outside.”

“We gotta go out in the rain.” Tommy says, with a new found determination, and he jumps off his chair with a rush, running over to the front door. Floof raises his head in curiosity as Techno scrambles to follow after him.

“Hey- Hey, no, wait-”

“Come on!” Tommy drops down to the ground, grabbing at his shoes to pull them onto his feet. He raises his chin up towards the kitchen, trying to make a whistling noise. “Floof! Let’s go in the rain!”

“You’re still in your pajamas.” Techno points out, holding a hand against the door as Tommy fiddles with his shoe. “Take your shoes off, go eat first.”

“No thank you.” Tommy shakes his head, hopping onto his feet and trying to go for the doorknob, but the door hardly even budes with the way Techno’s leaning his weight against it. “Oh, come on!”

“You’ll get soaked.”

“That’s the *point* .”

“Shouldn’t you go wear a jacket? Take an umbrella?”

“No, that’s not how you do it.” Tommy snorts, like Techno has said something silly. “You have to get soaked. That’s what Wilby said.”

Technoblade doesn’t feel convinced.

“Open the doooooor.” Tommy whines, pulling at the doorknob and getting no results. “Pleaseee?”

“I don’t know...” Techno trails off, weighing his options. On one hand, this is a Tommy thing. Obviously, it’ll make him happy, he has no doubt that Tommy will have the time of his life just jumping into a few puddles. On the other hand, Techno’s going to have to clean water off his floors, most likely. What if Tommy gets sick? Well, he has medicine, a lot of it, but still. Big concern.

“Technobladeeee.” Tommy says, dramatic and drawn out. He looks up at Techno with a pleading face, standing up on his tippy toes as he holds onto the doorknob, and Techno sighs.

The things he’ll do.

“Alright.” He says with an air of defeat, and Tommy lets out a cheer as he swings open the door, immediately running out into the hallway. “Don’t go too far up ahead.” He calls out, Tommy laughing with a childish joy as he goes down the hall as fast as he can. Techno quickly goes to pull on his boots to follow.

He turns to the apartment. “Floof, you want to come along?” The dog underneath the table tilts its head for a moment, but then simply yawns, and stays there. “Alright. Hold down the fort, I guess.” Techno shrugs, and he leaves the door open as he goes to follow where Tommy’s ran off.

Tommy’s already ran down the stairs, and Techno can hear Tommy’s quick footsteps leave through the door at ground level. Technoblade doesn’t run like Tommy, but he does go a bit faster than usual, if only to try and keep Tommy within his range of vision.

By the time Techno's at the front doors of the apartment building, Tommy is already into the street, squealing and jumping around with his arms waving through the air as the rain pours down around him. He's getting more soaked by the minute, and Techno watches from where he is for a moment, staying dry and just letting Tommy spin around on his own, water sticking to his shirt and pants.

"Techno!" Tommy calls after a minute or two. He stops in his spinning, smiling wide and jumping right into a puddle, the water splashing out across the pavement. "Come on, Technoblade, come on!"

"I think I'll stay right here." Techno declines, but Tommy hardly takes no for an answer, and goes running straight for Techno. "No, you don't- keep your wet hair away from me." Techno holds onto Tommy by the shoulders, forcing him to come to an abrupt stop and holding the kid away, even as Tommy reaches his arms out to Techno.

"You have to dance with me, we have to go dance in the rain." Tommy says, like it's absolutely important. To him, it is. To Techno? He doesn't want to get wet in the cold rain.

"You can go dance, I can watch from here."

"No, no-!" Tommy laughs, trying to get past Techno's hands so he can stick his wet hair into his shirt. "Wil's not here, so you have to fill in."

"I'll get soaked."

"That's the *point* !" Tommy repeats, and he grabs at Techno's sleeves, trying to pull him towards the street. "Let's go."

"No thank you."

"Yes thank you." Tommy nods. He yanks at Techno's arm, trying to make him budge, but there's not much success. "Techno!"

“Tommy.” Technoblade responds, and Tommy lets out a big puff of air, a slight bit of frustration coming through.

“Please? Pretty please? Let’s go, let’s go, let’s go-”

“Aren’t you cold?” Technoblade asks, and Tommy just lets out a scoff.

“I do not feel the cold. I am too awesome for it.”

“Of course.”

“Come on.”

“No.”

“Please?”

“Still a no.”

“But you have to.” Tommy pouts. “It’s *raining* .” He says, like there’s some hidden meaning behind that, and maybe there is. Maybe, before, Wilbur and Tommy used to always dance in the rain, each and every time, and maybe this is Tommy’s normal, this is something he used to have.

And with that thought, Technoblade sighs, and knows he can’t just take it away.

“Alright.” He agrees, and Tommy lets out a squeal, pulling Techno along by the hand, leading them both into the street.

The rain falls down on them, soaking into their hair, clothes, and sticking to their skin. It’s a bit cold, but not as freezing as Techno had thought.

Tommy grins wide and holds onto Techno’s hands, jumping up and down and swinging their arms side to side, dancing to a song that Techno can’t hear. Tommy closes his eyes and smiles with such a warm, pure joy, that Techno can’t help but smile along. He spins Tommy around, lets the kid lead him around in circles around the street.

Tommy laughs, content and joyful, and Technoblade picks him up off the ground, Tommy giving a scream of surprise as Techno lifts him up.

Technoblade spins around in the rain, spinning them both, and Tommy screams and laughs and sings a song Techno doesn’t know. Tommy lifts his hands up towards the cloudy sky, Techno grins out into the rain, and it’s good.

This is good.

Chapter End Notes

Wilbur, at this exact moment: My big brother senses are tingling. I'm being REPLACED-

slash jay, slash jay. Hope you liked that chapter! Living up to my fluff reputation, lols

Thank you for reading

Rainy days equal BONDING

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It's been a week since Wilbur's set off with Phil to search for Tommy.

And it's been three weeks since Wilbur got separated from Tommy. Three entire weeks without his little brother at his side. Three entire weeks, and then some, since Wilbur lost sight of the very reason he is still kicking like hell in this world.

He won't lie, the worry is very nearly tearing him apart.

Even from when Wilbur was young, his main concern, his main attention was always Tommy. Keeping him safe, keeping him fed, keeping him warm, that was his mission as an older brother. It's always just been them both.

And when the apocalypse hit, it became a mission of keeping Tommy alive and safe from the new dangers that have popped up. Starvation and the cold became something that stared them both in the face, and those creatures that were always looking for something to kill didn't help either.

So Wilbur adapted, he gave his all and put all his energy into not just surviving, but making sure Tommy would be alright. Raising a kid in this world is hardly a piece of cake, Wilbur isn't even sure he was doing alright beforehand, but this is the best he can do.

Curling up around Tommy during the night to keep the cold away and to keep him warm, that's something he can do. Sacrificing his own rations to give Tommy a better meal, that's something he will do. Killing those horrible, disgusting monsters that are a constant threat, that is something he has to do, even with the sickly fear that comes with bashing in a zombie's head.

Wilbur likes to say it gets easier with time, but honestly, there will always be that quiet disgust in the back of his mind, a small voice saying that he would rather do anything than kill this thing. He ignores it in favor of protecting Tommy.

At the very start of all this shit, Wilbur had been one of the people who killed a zombie very early on. When it first started, there was the general confusion, the slow realization that made people falter and eventually become victims to a zombie on the road.

Wilbur had caught on quick enough when he saw someone get mauled to death in front of him. Then that zombie had noticed Wilbur, noticed Tommy hiding behind him, and Wilbur didn't have anything to attack with except for the precious guitar in his hands.

Well, he would burn every guitar in the world if it meant keeping Tommy away from those things.

Tommy had screamed and Wilbur *swung*, bashing the end of his guitar into the zombie's head and sending it flying into a wall. He ended up breaking the guitar, but with the rising panic of an oncoming apocalypse, that was left behind and forgotten.

Then they had both run, seeking shelter and safety, finding it and losing it and searching for it again. Throughout it all, Wilbur held Tommy's hand and made sure that he would always be a shield between his little brother and the undead.

But now, Wilbur's not there for Tommy at all. Now, when he wakes up in the morning, he has to go through the same repeating panic of 'where's Tommy? Where has he gone?' only to remember that he isn't there at all. Instead, he's alone with a group that will hopefully keep him safe, and Wilbur is with a man who seems too kind to be true.

Wilbur is wary of Phil at first, he'll admit, but it's easy to warm up to him when the guy is so friendly and earnest about his well-being.

When Wilbur wakes up with a gasping breath and a near scream, Phil doesn't mention it, but he does sit beside Wilbur and rambles on about anything he can think of. He often tells of the towns he's visited before, of the people he's met.

At first, it seemed like just a frantic attempt to keep Wilbur from slipping into a full blown panic, but now, it feels like a routine, hearing Phil's stories, hearing his adventures. Now, Wilbur asks for them, because listening to a man's travels is better than thinking about how scared Tommy must be without Wil at his side.

Plus, he likes the sound of Phil's laugh. Wilbur's never had any close friends throughout the apocalypse, but if things go well, Wilbur hopes to part ways with Phil being someone he can trust, maybe even depend on.

Phil's first story that he ever tells Wilbur is right after Wilbur wakes up too early in the morning, tears streaming down his face. He's able to somewhat get himself together by the time Phil stirs, but it's still not enough to hide the fact he was sobbing quietly just a few moments prior.

So, Phil just starts talking.

"Did you know I once visited a community that had pet parrots?"

Wilbur blinks, wiping at his face for what feels like the hundredth time, his eyes feeling rubbed raw by this point. "You've what?"

"Parrots. Colorful ones, too. Apparently the people rescued them from some apartment, a person must've owned them before all this shit went down. There were about...seven, I think? Real cute, too, one of them kept landing on my hat as I tried to get around."

Wilbur snorts, trying to picture the image of Phil walking around with a bird on his head. "Bet that one was your favorite."

"Maybe." Phil shrugs, a stupid little smile on his face. "I really wish I could've taken one with me, although it would've been hard to take care of one on the go. Imagine that, though. Coming across a survivor with a bird on his head. You'd probably think I was crazy."

“We’re all a little crazy, here.” Wilbur hummed, Phil not denying. “Did they have names?”

“Well, I don’t remember most of them. I know the one that kept sitting on my hat was named Nugget, though.”

Wilbur had burst out laughing at that, and the morning had seemed a little brighter. When they continued on their way to travel towards where Dream’s group might’ve gone, Phil only continued to fill the silence, and in turn, also kept Wilbur’s mind from wandering into anything bad.

“Have you ever driven a car during the past year?” Phil asks, Wilbur easily answering that question.

“No.” He hadn’t even driven a car before the apocalypse. Him and Tommy often just traveled on the sidewalk. “But I’m guessing you’re going to say you have? How the fuck did you manage to get a working *car*?”

“Well, it wasn’t really working.” Phil thinks for a bit, trying to recall. “And I didn’t really drive it, per say, I just steered it as it went down a hill. Crashed right into a building. Got away fine, though, not as bad as the last time I was in a crash.”

“Was that one before or after the zombies?” Wilbur asks dryly, and Phil just laughs.

“After, around there. When everything was still in chaos. I got into a bad car crash with a friend, he got away fine, but holy shit, I swear I thought I was going to die.” Phil grins, shaking his head even with the bad memory. “We were surrounded by an entire horde, too. I don’t even know how I got away.”

“That’s a shitty way to start off the apocalypse.”

“Sure is!” Phil chimes, and he tilts his head to Wilbur. “But we move on and we grow. Surviving in this world is only half of it, y’know? We also have to live.”

Wilbur had faltered at that, and he scrambles to give a proper response. “I get that. Me and Tommy have our own things to keep us going.”

“Yeah?” Phil raises his eyebrows. “Like what?” He asks, and he says it gently, like he’s careful of Wilbur refusing to answer.

“We have routines. Or, habits, I would say. Even with the zombies, I still want him to be in wonder of the world, so we enjoy the little things.” Wilbur gives a glance up towards the sky, where dark clouds block out the sun. “Like the rain.”

Phil looks up with him. “Good source of water.”

“Good atmosphere to dance in.” Wilbur smiles, and Phil looks at him with an intrigued look. “Whenever it rains, me and Tommy dance around in the puddles for a while, just enjoying the weather. He loves it particularly when we’re in the mud. Although, I’ll say, it’s hard to get mud out of his clothes after he rolls around in it.”

Phil laughs, warm and nearly fond. “That sounds sweet.”

“It’s nice.” Wilbur nods. “He’s a horrible dancer, but I’m not much better, to be fair.” Phil cackles at that, shaking his head as Wilbur’s heart fills with a quiet worry.

“Maybe it’ll rain soon for us.” Phil notes, looking up and across the sky, squinting at where the clouds seem particularly dense. “I’m not dancing, though.”

“Well, I can’t dance alone.” Wilbur says, and it feels like he can hear Tommy’s voice in his ears right now. A hand tugging at his own, insisting that Wilbur go join him. “It’s alright, though. I’d rather hold off dancing till-”

“Hold that thought.” Phil cuts him off, grabbing Wilbur by the arm and pulling him to the side, holding out a gun and shooting it, landing a bullet right into the head of a zombie half hidden underneath a car they were walking beside.

Wilbur jolts with the bang, and he stares at the body on the ground for a bit longer than needed, Phil and him standing still. “Sorry.” Phil grins apologetically, and Wilbur blinks up at him with a shake of his head.

“No, no- that just- That startled me.” Wilbur sighs. Phil’s still holding onto his arm, and he gives Wilbur a small squeeze before letting go. “Thanks.”

Phil hums, looking around the street. “I think we should hurry on walking, because that might’ve alerted a few more than just this one.”

Wilbur frowns at the sight of a few more zombies coming out from the shadows of broken, abandoned buildings. “Ah, for fuck’s sake- *Phil*.”

“I reacted on reflex!” Phil holds his hands up in defense, his gun still held in one hand. “I see zombie, I kill zombie.”

“And now you’ve called the zombies too. And I have my own axe and everything-” Wilbur huffs, looking behind him at the few strays approaching them. “Whatever, just run.” He says, quickly walking away down the street. Phil follows at his heels with a quiet wheeze.

“We could kill them off?” Phil suggests.

“I would’ve thought you would want to save bullets?”

“I was thinking more that you use your axe.”

“So you want *me* to kill them, ah, I see-”

“No, no, that’s not what I’m saying-”

“You’re expecting me to do all the work, is what you’re implying, that’s not very polite of you, Phil-”

“Oh, fuck off.” Phil shoves at his shoulder, and Wilbur takes it as a motivation to run faster. “Hey! Don’t leave me behind!”

“Run faster, then!” Wilbur laughs, and Phil may curse him out, but he’s still smiling along.

They continue to run, and after, they’ll continue to talk. Wilbur tells Phil of Tommy, and in return, Phil will give stories of his own. The conversation doesn’t quite keep away the ache in Wilbur’s chest and the fear that settles on his shoulders, but it’s enough to keep him from wanting to curl up into a ball and sob.

He still has nightmares, though.

Phil only really mentions it on their fourth day of travel, the two of them huddled by a fire, taking shelter in the middle of a poorly made barrier. It’s late at night, but Phil still keeps watch, and keeps the fire going bright as Wilbur wakes up with a startle.

Wil can’t recall what his dream had been about, but Tommy’s name had been on the tip of his tongue, and he had barely bit it back with the knowledge of any nearby strays being able to hear him.

Phil sits at the fire with a dazed off look, one hand resting on the axe at his side, and his other hand supporting his chin as he leans his elbow on one of his knees. He’s sitting just beside Wil, too close for him to have not heard anything, and Wilbur hesitantly raises his head to him with an expectation of some sort of question.

And Phil does ask, but not in a prying manner.

“You alright?” He questions, eyes not leaving the fire, his face lit up from the light of the flames. “The night has been pretty quiet for the most part, I think a stray did pass by earlier, but it didn’t see us, just walked past.”

Wilbur doesn’t sit up from where he’s laying down on the ground, but he turns his head to Phil. “That’s good.” He nods. “I can... I can take watch, if you want. Since I’m already up.”

“You didn’t answer my question.” Phil reminds him gently. He sounds- not quite tired, but rather subdued. Quiet, calm, yet still perfectly on guard. Wilbur doesn’t think Phil ever loses that watchful glint in his eyes. “You okay?”

“Of course.” Wilbur gives an answer nearly instantly.

“You mumble in your sleep.” Phil points out, and Wilbur goes still. “I know it’s not really my place, but I worry.”

Wilbur sighs, turning his head up towards the cracked roof over their heads, closing his eyes. “I just miss him.”

“Tommy?”

“Mhm.” Wilbur feels a tug in his chest, and for a second, he thinks he’s about to burst into tears, but he reels it back. “God. We’ve never been separated like this before, you know? I mean, there were times, when we’d part ways for just a bit, but that was when we were in a safe town. And that was only for a few hours at a time, at most. Now, I don’t know where he is, or if he’s alright, and I just, he could-” Wilbur’s voice wavers dangerously, and he cuts himself off.

“I’m sure he’s okay, mate.” Phil reassures. “Even in a world like this, people would want to protect a kid. He’ll be safe, at least because of others’ kindness. I’m sorry you both got separated.”

“It’s not *your* fault.” Wilbur chokes out. “Just the fucking zombie apocalypse’s. Those things on the street have always been a threat to everyone, I blame the horde.”

Phil stays silent for a moment, and Wil takes a few seconds to bite back the urge to cry, even with the sheer worry and grief that’s ripping through him right now. He rubs at his eyes, turning his head to Phil again.

“Wilbur, I...” Phil starts, trailing off, narrowing his eyes towards the fire. He hesitates for a second, two, then continues again. “I promise you that you’re going to be alright. You and Tommy.” It doesn’t sound like what he was really going to say, but Wilbur doesn’t press against it, and instead just slowly processes Phil’s words.

“I’m not your responsibility.” Wilbur huffs. “I can get by on my own.”

“For now, you are.” Phil insists. “I’m the one who agreed to help you look for Tommy, aren’t I?”

Wilbur frowns. “That doesn’t mean I expect you to risk your life for me.”

“I risk my life for anyone.” Phil shrugs. “It’s the least I could do.”

Wilbur’s face scrunches up into something displeased, but he then yawns, and Phil just gives a small laugh.

“I’ll take watch.” Wilbur offers, but Phil just waves a hand.

“You’re still healing from the wound on your head, mate. Go back to sleep.”

Wilbur's expression turns a bit grumpy at the mention of his injury. He's been healing just fine for the past few days. He's hardly even had headaches. "You've hardly slept at all."

"I'll wake you up in two hours or so, and then I'll rest." Phil bargains.

"One hour."

"Two."

"*One.*"

Phil snorts. "Alright. I'll wake you up in an hour."

Wilbur sniffs, satisfied with that, and he turns over on his side, staring at the fire and letting them both fall back into silence. He stares at the flames, and eventually closes his eyes, drifting off with a small whisper of something safe surrounding him.

"Goodnight, Wil." Phil says, and Wilbur doesn't answer back, sound asleep.

"You need help with that?" Technoblade asks, setting down a bucket in the street, pushing back hair out of his face.

"I got it!" Tommy insists, holding two large buckets by the handles, dragging them out in the middle of the road. "I'm a strong man. I eat carrots."

Technoblade snorts as Tommy drops the buckets down, leaning over them to watch the rain already start to collect. It's raining a bit less than before, but it's still coming down, and Technoblade would like to take advantage of the water.

He's got plenty of water stocked away in the storagehouse, but he will take whatever he can get. After Tommy's tired himself out with the dancing and the spinning around and jumping into the puddles, Technoblade puts them both to work by setting out buckets onto the street.

"These are going to be heavy to bring back inside." Tommy notes, trying to imagine the weight of water in the buckets he just carried out. "They're going to be stuck here."

"I'll carry them in." Technoblade shrugs, counting the buckets they've placed out into the rain, and deeming it good enough. He wonders if he should try going for a patrol today, even with the rain. Although, Tommy had insisted upon the two of them staying inside...

He looks back at Tommy to find him trying to eat the rainwater, mouth open wide towards the sky. There's a certain fondness that comes with seeing the kid doing something so childish, eyes scrunched up so no droplets will fall into his eyes, his tongue sticking out as he squints up at the clouds. He pushes his wet hair back, trying earnestly to catch the rain.

Techno's decided. Today is a lazy day.

"Come on." Technoblade says, walking back towards the apartment.

"No, no wait, I've almost got it." Tommy says, sticking out his tongue again. "I'm eating the rain. It is delicious. Fine dining."

"Come eat breakfast instead."

Tommy gives a grumpy noise, but he does follow, and Technoblade wrings out his own hair as they walk back underneath the shelter of a roof.

“I want to go back to sleep now.”

“Bath first.” Technoblade insists. “Then food. Then you can go to sleep.”

“But then I won’t be tired anymore.” Tommy frowns, his shoes leaving wet footprints against the ground as they both go back up to the apartment.

“We’ll see about that.” Techno just hums, and Tommy gives a puff of air that’s almost like a scoff.

The food inside has gone cold by now, and Technoblade just puts it to the side in favor of making a quick bowl of soup. Floof has moved from underneath the kitchen table to on top of the couch, and he sleeps peacefully as Tommy walks beside him, his clothes still soaking wet, his hair flat against his head.

“Floof, you should’ve come with us, you would’ve loved the rain.” Tommy says, patting at the dog’s snout. Floof only opens his eyes and blinks at Tommy with a huff. “We should go play fetch in the rain.”

“Go take a bath!” Techno calls out from the kitchen, and Tommy gives an upset noise.

“I’m *going*!” Tommy frowns, turning back to Floof. “He is a bitch, Floof. A big one.”

Floof just yawns, and Tommy gives the dog a nice pat on the head before heading off to take a bath and change into some dry clothes. He only changes into another set of pajamas, rather than actual clothes, and by the time he comes out, Techno’s sitting at the kitchen table, clean, dry clothes on and his hair out of its usual braid, hanging over his shoulders.

They eat, Tommy sneaks a piece of chicken to Floof as he walks underneath the kitchen table, and Technoblade writes down something in his journal, the rain continuing to pour

down outside. It feels strangely calm, and truly safe within the walls of this apartment.

It feels like home.

By the time Technoblade looks up from his writing, Tommy's already finished his food, and he's dozing off at the table with his head resting against his arms. Technoblade smiles, closing the book and putting it to the side, then reaching forward and poking at Tommy's arm.

"Hey." He speaks quietly. "Go sleep in bed."

"Uhg." Tommy lifts his head with a yawn, squinting at Technoblade. "It's cold." He says, and Technoblade gives a little frown.

"That's why you should go warm up."

"I don't want to sleep alone."

"Then I'll go with you." Techno shrugs.

"I also don't wanna walk."

Technoblade narrows his eyes at Tommy, who gives a stupid little smug look in response. "I'm not carrying you."

"But I'm tired..." Tommy sighs, resting his chin on the table. "Mmmmm, actually, I'll sleep here."

"You're not sleeping in the kitchen."

“Mhm. Goodnight.”

Technoblade sighs, rolling his eyes before getting up off his chair and heading off towards the bedroom. Tommy lifts his head up with a rush.

“Where are you going?!”

“To sleep.” Techno answers, hearing the screech of a chair being pushed back.

“Wait!”

Technoblade ignores the footsteps of someone following him, and instead just walks right into his room, circling around the bed and sitting down with a quiet sigh. How is it that he’s done nothing yet feels so tired? He blames Tommy.

“Hey!” Tommy exclaims, standing at the doorway with his hand against the doorknob.

“Hello.” Technoblade pats at the spot beside him, and Tommy gives a happy smile. He climbs onto the bed and crawls right underneath the blankets, sticking his cold hands onto Techno’s face.

“Look how cold my hands are!” He says, slapping his palms over Techno’s cheek, and Technoblade makes a face at the chill that sticks to Tommy’s skin. He pulls Tommy’s hands off by the wrist, cupping his hands in his own so they can at least warm up a little. “Why aren’t your hands cold?”

“Maybe because I didn’t dip my hands into a puddle outside.” Techno responds, squeezing Tommy’s fingers lightly, and Tommy scrunches his nose a bit with a frown. “Get under the blankets, you’re still too cold. You’ll get sick.” Technoblade does have medicine stored away, just in case, but he’d prefer for the kid to not get sick at all.

“I’m *already* underneath the blanket.” Tommy huffs, falling onto his back with a sigh, then tugging at the blankets until it’s just at his nose, his eyes poking out and staring at Techno with a curious look. “I never get sick. Only idiots get sick.”

“Exactly.”

Tommy blinks, not seeming to catch it for a moment, and Techno just takes the moment to lay down properly as Tommy slowly processes his words and lets out an angry little noise, a foot flying out and whacking Techno in the shin from underneath the blankets.

Techno just snorts, laying down beside Tommy and pulling his damp pink hair out over his shoulder, braiding it absent-mindedly.

“This is much better than walking around.” Tommy declares, Techno rolling his eyes at the bit of sass he hears in his voice. “Look, even Floof is sleeping. It’s a sleep day.” He points at the dog in the corner of the room, sleeping on his own comfy bed.

“Then go to sleep.” Techno says simply.

“I am. I will, watch.” Tommy says, shoving his face into the pillow. “I’m sleeping.”

“Good for you.” Techno smiles softly, his hands undoing the braid he’s just made, and then redoing it again. They both fall into a calm silence, the sound of the rain pouring outside.

Then,

“What if I was the zombie king?”

Techno turns to Tommy. “The what.”

Even with the way Tommy seems to slowly lose energy and get more tired with each word, he goes on to detail how he's going to be the best zombie killer in existence, how he's going to kill every single zombie ever, and so, he will become The Zombie King.

"Really?" Technoblade wonders if Tommy is just rambling to keep his mind off of something. The way he talks too fast, just a little too frantic, it gives something away. "How are you going to be king of the zombies if you're killin' them all?"

"I would be the king of *everyone* , not just the zombies." Tommy scoffs, eyes half closed. "I'm just called the zombie king because I killed all the zombies. It's a cool title, to make me sound cool."

"Of course." Technoblade goes to say something else, but then stops, letting the silence drag on. Tommy shifts around from where he's laying down.

"Do you think it's still going to be raining when we wake up?"

"Maybe."

Silence. Then, "Do you think the zombies get wet in the rain?"

"Well," Techno shrugs. "I don't think they care much about the water, so, yeah."

"Hmmm." Tommy seems to think again of something to ask. "What's the biggest number of zombies you've seen?"

Technoblade thinks for a moment. He does not honestly know, but he'll give a good estimate. "Hundreds."

“Oh.” Tommy blinks. “That’s a lot.”

“I’ve seen a lot of zombies.” Technoblade admits, hands fiddling with his braid. “Killed a lot of them too.”

Tommy doesn’t respond for a moment, eyes looking off into the distance, focused on something else. Technoblade waits, for maybe another question, another random ramble, but instead, he gets a simple confession.

“You know, I think you can just be the zombie king instead.” Tommy mumbles, Techno’s hands going still. “I’ll make you a crown if you want. I don’t want to kill all the zombies. There’s too many, and, and-” He pauses. Hesitates. “Can I tell you a secret?”

Technoblade slowly nods, keeping his eyes pointed towards the ceiling. “Sure.”

There's a beat of silence, and it drags on, Techno wondering if Tommy is going to say anything at all.

"I'm scared of them." Tommy admits, hardly a whisper. "Of the zombies."

"...Can I also tell you a secret?" Techno asks, turning his head towards Tommy. Tommy looks at him with curious eyes, nodding. "I'm scared of them too."

Tommy blinks, face curling up into a small smile. “That’s ok.” He says, voice small. “I won’t tell anyone.”

Technoblade can’t help but speak back in the same quiet voice. “Promise?”

“I promise.” Tommy holds out a pinky finger. “Pinky promise. We are both brave men who aren’t scared of no zombies.”

Technoblade laughs a little, locking pinkies with Tommy. “Yeah, we are.”

Wilbur wakes up to a slight cold chill in the air, and Phil’s jacket over his shoulders. He blinks his eyes open to the brightness of day, then notes that the day is a little dim.

And also that Phil did not wake him up, that liar.

“Good morning.” Phil greets as Wilbur sits up from the ground. “It’s sprinkling.”

“You said you were going to wake me up.” Wilbur mutters out, rubbing at his eyes with a yawn. “It’s *morning*.”

“Yup.” Phil only grins, and he rummages through his bag to give some food to Wilbur. “Want to wait the rain out or do you want to keep moving?”

Wilbur frowns as he looks out towards the street, seeing the tiniest bit of rain fall from the sky. It’s not too bad, but it’s bound to make them both a little cold after a while.

Wilbur chooses for the two of them to keep moving.

They pack up their stuff, and go on their way, wary of any zombies nearby while they were camping out for the night. Thankfully, there’s nothing around, and they travel undisturbed.

Until,

“Hold on.” Phil holds an arm out to Wilbur, making them both stop in their tracks. “Get down.” He says, pulling Wilbur behind a wall, the two of them hiding out of sight.

“What?” Wilbur says, following Phil’s instructions, crouching down low as Phil glances out towards the street. “What is it?”

“People.”

“Survivors?” Wilbur presses. “How many?”

“Three, I think?” Phil hums in the back of his throat. “Maybe we should wait for them to pass by?”

“Let me look.” Wilbur says, and Phil moves to the side to let him see. Looking out across the empty road, Wilbur spots the survivors that Phil had seen, and he stares for a while, seeing them get closer and closer, until Wil realizes he knows these survivors.

“Wait.” Wilbur says, eyes wide as he leans closer to get a better look. He squints, hope filling up his heart. “That’s-”

He counts the figures. One, two, three, just like Phil said. He recognizes two of the faces from here. He knows the one in the middle is Dream, but-

There’s only three people.

Wilbur’s heart sinks right into his stomach as he gasps in a shuddering breath, and Phil grabs onto his shoulder.

“They don’t have Tommy.” Wilbur breathes out, and then immediately pulls away from Phil to go run towards Dream’s group.

Chapter End Notes

WOAHHHHH WASSUP

I'm sleepy hope you liked that, thank you for reading have a good day
also

It was sprinkling where Phil and Wilbur were camping.

It was pouring for Techno and Tommy.

Put the pieces together :)

zombie apocalypse? More like Family Bonding

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Wil!” Phil calls out, making a grab for Wilbur’s arm, tugging at his sleeve. Wilbur pulls away from him, doesn’t even look back, and runs across the road, nearly tripping in his haste to get to Dream’s group.

Wilbur regains his footing and runs even faster, heart slamming into his ribs as he keeps trying to tell himself he’s just not seeing it right, he’s only miscounting, that maybe they’ve made Tommy stay somewhere safe, while they explore-

“*DREAM!*” Wilbur screams, angry and scared and loud, and he knows that’s caught their attention quickly. Their heads whip towards him, surprised faces that are in complete disbelief.

For a moment, Sapnap reaches for his gun, and Wilbur reaches for his axe, holding it tightly in his hand, glancing around for any cover-

“Wilbur?!” Dream calls back, and Wil forgets even trying to take cover, instead he runs the rest of the distance, and comes to a sudden stop just a few feet away, panting for air, his axe heavy in his hand. His eyes burn as he realizes again that Tommy isn’t with them, and he struggles to push down that rising panic.

“Holy *shit* -” Dream swears, laughing a little in shock. He looks overjoyed to see Wil. Wilbur doesn’t exactly feel the same.

They look like they’ve been going well, in the weeks he’s been gone. They still look dirty and worn, as anyone will in the apocalypse, but they seem well fed, well rested. A bit more put together than how Wil had remembered them.

But they don't have *Tommy* .

They stare at him as if he's a ghost, eyes wide, and Wilbur can feel himself shaking as he stands still, knuckles going white from how tightly he's holding onto the handle of his axe. Maybe he would be happy to see them too, if they had the person he's been actually searching for.

"You're alive!" George exclaims, laughing a little in bafflement. He shares a look with Sarnap and Dream, Sarnap grinning back with a nod. "He's alive, look-!"

Dream just stares, and at first, he had been smiling just as wide as the others, but he notices how Wilbur glares at him, and his smile falters a bit. His eyebrows furrow as he takes in Wil's expression, the way he's standing like he's ready to fight off a zombie.

"You got out of the-" Sarnap goes to say, and Wilbur cuts him right off.

" *Where is he ?* "

They pause.

Dream takes the tiniest step back, and that sends alarms running through Wilbur's head. Is that guilt, is that hesitation to tell what Wilbur is fearing? He wants to know, he *has* to know, or else he's going to break apart into a million little pieces.

Silence drags for a moment, too long, too painful. They exchange glances but don't say a thing, and it pisses Wil off to no end.

"WHERE IS MY LITTLE BROTHER?!" Wilbur demands, and they flinch at the outburst. His voice wavers near the end, and he sounds more desperate than angry. He's annoyed at how near tears he sounds, but he can't help it, because he really is going to break down if something's happened to Tommy. "Where's-?! Why isn't he-?"

“Listen.” Dream holds his hands out slowly.

“You better tell me he is safe and *alive* or I swear I’m-” Wilbur speaks slowly, each word spoken as if it’s physically burning him, and Sapnap cuts him off before Wil can elaborate on any acts of violence.

“He’s alive!” Sapnap blurts out, holding his hands up when Wilbur looks at him. “He’s alive, Wilbur.”

Wilbur sucks in a breath, and it nearly comes out as a sob.

The anger fizzles out into nothing, just pure relief and joy, then exhaustion. He has to pull back the emotions bubbling up inside him and shove them down, forcing himself to blink back tears, because Tommy is alive, Tommy is alright and alive and there’s no need for grief.

Tommy is okay. He isn’t a tiny zombie in the street, he isn’t a dead body at the side of the road, he’s okay.

Wilbur hasn’t lost him. He hasn’t failed in the one thing he’s been trying so hard on.

He feels as if he’s nearly going to break apart right there, and he barely registers the footsteps behind him until there’s a familiar hand resting on his shoulder.

“Wil?” Phil asks, and he doesn’t even look at Dream and the others, he only leans towards Wilbur. He looks worried, but Wilbur can’t find it in himself to reassure the man that he’s okay, just shaken. “Wilbur, breathe.” Phil suggests gently, and Wil nods, taking in a gasping breath.

He leans forward, forcing down the last bits of emotional whiplash, and Wilbur bats Phil’s hand away, taking a few steps forward. The survivors in front of him are looking at him with

nervousness, and suddenly that anger is back, simmering underneath his skin.

It burns and it grows, and while Wilbur is so, so glad Tommy is okay, he realizes that he still isn't *here* .

“Where is he, then?” He asks, voice a bit calmer, but more sharp this time around. “Why don’t you have him?”

Have they lost him? Given him to a better group, given him to a worse group? Have they left him behind completely? Or are they lying?

Wilbur couldn’t be held responsible for what he’d do if they were lying about Tommy’s death to him.

“Well...” Dream falters, shaking his head. “He’s not too far. There was- We came across a large base in the city, while we were traveling. There were these walls...”

“The kid went inside, and got found by the survivor who lived there, and he- listen, we were *not* going to mess with him, his literal nickname is the Blood God, so-” Sapnap crosses his arms, as he continues off, and Dream hits him in the arm. “Ow-!”

“What?” Wilbur feels quiet horror sink into his chest, and suddenly it’s not enough that Tommy is alive, because what they’re saying is that he’s in the company of a dangerous stranger.

“We didn’t have a choice!” George yells, throwing his hands up. “He wouldn’t give back Tommy, and it’s not like we had anything to go against him with! We hardly even had food.”

“You left my *brother* with a maniac named the Blood God?!” Wilbur yells, and George winces, seeming to regret saying anything.

“Not by choice!” Dream yells back, holding an arm out in front of George. “He gave us supplies in return, and told us-”

“In return?” Phil speaks up, and they all turn to him as if they’ve only just remembered he’s there. “Supplies in return- *what?*”

“I mean-” Dream stutters, and he looks at Sapnap, who gives a hesitant look back. “No, I meant-”

Phil steps past Wilbur as Wil slowly processes his words, and George stumbles back with hands raised in surrender. He has no clue what face Phil is wearing, but clearly it’s enough for George to just step away. Sapnap looks daring, but scared.

“What the fuck does that imply?” Phil demands, voice ice cold.

“Not what you’re thinking, I swear-” Dream says, Sapnap glancing at Wilbur with a nervous look, as if asking him to make Phil stand down. Wilbur only tilts his head.

“Really? So how would you answer me if I asked where you got your food from?” Phil asks, and Dream opens his mouth, only to shut it again as Phil goes on.

“He had food to spare! And he told us if we brought back Wilbur, then-” Dream stops, choosing to not finish that sentence, because it might just make it all much worse.

“That was a fucking child, did you honestly-?!”

“Hold on.” Wilbur says, and there must be something in his voice, because they all stop, and suddenly the tension jumps up so high that the air feels almost suffocating.

Phil turns to look back at Wil, only to then move out of the way as Wilbur stalks forward with a quiet furious fire in his eyes. He drops his axe on the ground, ignores the clatter of it

hitting the concrete, and instead makes a direct beeline towards Dream.

“I-” Dream stammers a bit, trying to walk back, only for Wilbur to grab the front of his shirt and yank him towards him.

“Are you saying you gave Tommy away- for food?” Wil speaks quietly, anger barely contained.

Dream hesitates, and suddenly, he looks scared. Wilbur only feels even more furious at the sight. “No- It’s- It’s not like that, I mean-”

“No, no, repeat what you said. Say it again. Because if I heard you correctly, what you’re saying is that you traded my baby brother- for fucking *SUPPLIES* .” Wilbur yells, and Dream pulls away from him, stumbling back.

Wilbur grabs him again, pulls his fist back, and punches Dream right across the face.

He falls backwards with the impact of it, and Wil goes down with him, the two of them slamming into the ground. Dream hits back once, then seems to decide against it, and only tries to stop the hits coming his way.

“Dream-!” George calls out in alarm, rushing towards them.

“HEY-!” Sappnap yells, reaching a hand out to pull Wilbur away, only to stop when a gun gets aimed right at his head. “WOAH, no, no, what the fuck-?!”

“Back up.” Phil points with his gun, and Sappnap walks back, arms raised. George has his hands up already by the time Phil sets his gaze on him, and they stare in shock as Wilbur continues to scream.

“YOU FUCKING *BASTARD* -!” Wilbur cries, Dream coughing as he gets punched across the face again, holding out his hands to try and shield himself. “YOU LITTLE-”

“Stop it! Wilbur!” George yells, and Sapnap shifts, hand going for the gun tucked away underneath his shirt. He doesn’t want to kill Wilbur, but if he’s going to keep attacking Dream, then maybe he’ll just aim carefully-

A bang sounds out, and Sapnap squeals, falling onto the ground as a bullet hits the ground before his feet.

“Don’t.” Phil warns, and then turns his attention to Wilbur, who hardly even noticed the gunshot in his anger.

“That was my BROTHER!” Wilbur grabs at Dream’s shirt, swinging at Dream’s arms covering his face. His voice sounds strained, cracking, and there are tears brimming in his eyes. “That was my Tommy, you FUCKING IDIOT, how could you even-?!”

“Wil.” Phil tries, and Dream kicks his legs in an attempt to get Wilbur away, and Wilbur just hits him again, a strangled noise coming from his throat.

“We were trying-!” Dream tries to say, and Wilbur hits him in the mouth the moment there’s an opening.

“You weren’t doing SHIT, you were meant to keep him safe, you were supposed to watch over him while I was gone! I wasn’t there for him, so you were supposed to make sure he was alright! And you FUCKED UP!” Dream makes a pain of noise as Wilbur lands another hit, and Wilbur ignores it entirely, pulls his arm back for another swing-

“Wilbur!” Phil yells, and he grabs at Wilbur’s wrist before he can bring it down again.

Dream flinches, lying still on the ground with his arms over his face, curled up on his side. His face isn’t so banged as to the point where it’s bleeding, but it’s rough, and Wilbur knows

it's going to hurt for a few days.

“Wil.” Phil calls again, quieter, and Wilbur turns his head to him, teeth gritted so hard he thinks he might chip a tooth, and his hands trembling so badly that it looks as if he's freezing.

He's barely holding back a sob, and while his face is one of fury, it's also overwhelmed with a certain devastation and disappointment that makes Phil want to just hug him.

“That's enough, mate.” Phil says, and he pulls at Wilbur's wrist, suggesting for him to back off from Dream.

“Phil.” Wilbur chokes out, and Phil shakes his head.

“That's enough, come on.” He tugs at Wilbur's arm, forcing him to stand on his feet, taking a few steps away from the man on the ground. He keeps his gun raised in the air, but also holds an arm around Wilbur, letting Wil stay behind him for just a moment, trying to compose himself. Wil gives a single, quiet sob into Phil's shoulder, before trying desperately to shove it all down once more.

“Dream.” George whispers, and Sapnap overlooks the risk of Phil's gun and crawls towards Dream, pulling his arms away from his bruised face.

“I'm ok.” Dream groans, and he leans against Sapnap's knee, George also taking the risk and quickly going to kneel beside them both. “That was- That was a little deserved, I'll give him that.”

“No it was not!” George yells, and he looks up with a scowl towards Wilbur, only to then hide behind Sapnap as Phil gives a withering glare in return.

“No, I-” Dream sighs, wincing as he looks at Wilbur. “Wil.”

Wilbur freezes for a moment, as if he's about to ignore Dream entirely, but he then raises his head with interest.

"The guy who has Tommy, he said that he wouldn't give the kid back unless we brought his brother to him. We were trying to look for you. Or, you know, some sort of evidence you were actually gone."

"How far is he from here?" Phil asks, gun pointed down towards the three of them.
"Tommy?"

Dream blinks, grinning even with the gun and the slight pain on his face. "Not far. The thing is-" He stops, making a face.

"There's a horde." Sapnap continues, and Wilbur raises his head towards them. "A big one, blocking the roads. It took us days to figure out a safe way around, and it might still be there. They travel slow."

Phil frowns, glancing towards Wilbur.

"We'll figure it out." Wil says quietly, and he pulls away from Phil's side to walk towards them.

Sapnap holds an arm over Dream with narrowed eyes. George lowers his head with a frown.

"What direction?" Wilbur chokes out, as if his words are too much for his throat. His hands still shake at his sides, and Dream looks at them for a moment before turning his head away, giving a look to George.

George hesitates, then shrugs off the backpack on his shoulders, digging into it and bringing out a map. He holds it out, then points down where they came from, the street empty and barren. "We're not far from the horde. The base itself is where Sapnap drew that little face, there."

Wilbur blinks down at the map in his hands, and he spots it, an angry little doodle with devil horns, as if it's marking down an evil demon's hiding place. He looks to the street in front of him, staring ahead, then nodding. "Okay. I..." He trails off. He doesn't want to apologize, he's still pissed off as hell, but it feels wrong to give them a goodbye as well. He doesn't want to say anything.

"Good luck, Wilbur." Dream grins, and Wilbur doesn't say anything, instead just walking past them and heading down the road with a rush.

Phil picks up his axe that he's left behind, and he pauses for a moment to look at the three of them, face carefully blank.

"Don't follow." He says, simple and calm. The threat behind it is as obvious as the gun still held in his hand.

"Wasn't planning on it." Sapnap snarks back, and Phil smiles, before going to follow after Wilbur. He leaves the three friends behind, and they fret over Dream, who insists he'll be fine, with only a few bruises to show for it.

Technoblade wakes up to a certain someone messing with his hair.

He's rather comfortable where he is, and he knows he doesn't have anything urgent to attend to, so he doesn't bother trying to move, but he does try and take note of what the heck Tommy is even doing.

There's a tug at his scalp from a small hand yanking at his hair, and Techno blinks his eyes open with a frown.

Tommy sits beside him with a focused look, face scrunched up as he gives his attention to the task at hand, and Technoblade just wonders how he even slept through this. Surely, he should've woken up the moment Tommy did. Surely, he would've stirred the second there were evil little hands grabbing at his hair.

"What are you doing." Techno deadpans, and Tommy shushes him.

"I'm almost done." He whispers, voice low as if Techno is still asleep.

Technoblade feels only more concerned with that. "How long have you been doing- whatever you're doing with my hair?"

"Like, a long time." Tommy says distractedly, humming a bit. "You sleep like a rock."

There's another slightly painful tug on his scalp again. Techno huffs, and he considers getting up and batting Tommy's hands away, but he's pretty sure if he moves at all, Tommy is going to start yelling loudly, so he sits still with reluctant patience.

The joys of having a child around.

"Okay..." Tommy trails off, and there's a strand of hair that falls right into Techno's face, Technoblade moving it out of the way. "Done! Man, I'm great at this." Tommy holds his hands up with a smug look, and Technoblade doesn't even move an inch, his eyes looking at Tommy with suspicion.

"What did you do?"

"You should look in the mirror." Tommy simply says as an answer, and he then goes to climb off the bed, leaving Techno no choice but to follow. When he sits up, he feels his hair sit in a weird way, and- oh yeah. He's definitely going to have to brush out tangles after this.

By the time Technoblade reaches the bathroom where Tommy is waiting, his hair has half fallen out of whatever strange attempt of a braid it was in, and when he looks at himself in the mirror, he is hardly surprised by the absolute mess on his head.

“Wow.” Technoblade deadpans, Tommy giving a stupid little grin from over the counter, both of them staring into the mirror. “Looks great.” He lies, and Tommy nods.

“You should totally let me style your hair.” Tommy says, holding two fingers up and making a snipping motion.

“Gonna pass on that one.” Technoblade huffs, making a mental note to keep scissors away from the kid. He’s not looking for a haircut anytime soon. He reaches for a brush on the counter, Tommy making a little noise of disappointment when Techno destroys his hard work.

“You can re-do it later.” Technoblade says, and he might regret that later, but it’s worth it for the way Tommy’s face lights up in excitement and joy. He just focuses on brushing his hair out, and stares at his own reflection in the mirror, noting the way his roots are really starting to show through the pink dye.

He oughta fix it up now, since he’s not going to be doing anything else today.

Techno puts the brush down on the counter and goes through the cabinets underneath the sink, looking for a box of hair dye he knows he has. Tommy swipes the brush off the counter when he thinks Techno won’t notice, and he simply taps the brush at his own hair, making a little face in the mirror.

Techno finds the hair dye, putting it down by the sink.

Tommy turns to him with a curious face. “What’s that?”

“This,” Technoblade yawns, standing up on his feet and pulling his hair back. “-is the thing that makes my hair pink.”

Tommy’s eyes glint with a small bit of wonder.

“ *I* want my hair pink.”

Techno pauses. Stares down at Tommy, then proceeds to regret it, because Tommy is giving his best attempt at puppy eyes. It’s slightly effective.

“Ehhh...”

“Pleaseee?!” Tommy leans over the sink, snatching the box off the counter. “It’ll be cool! I’ll look so cool.”

“I don’t know how your brother would react to finding you with bright pink hair.” Techno deadpans. Finding the kid in the hands of a stranger is one thing, but getting Tommy back with his hair looking like a piece of cotton candy? Techno isn’t so sure Wilbur will be thrilled over that idea.

“He won’t notice!” Tommy says, shaking his head.

“...really.”

Tommy gives a puff of air, holding the box to his chest. “Come onnn. Please? Pretty please.”

Technoblade hums. “I dunno...”

“But I’ll look so cool! We can match.” Tommy holds the box up, whacking Techno in the arm with it. “Think of the matching, Techno. Matching!”

Techno just snorts. “Alright, how about a compromise, then?”

About half an hour later, Tommy’s got a small lock of pink at the front of his hair, and he is incredibly proud of it. He shows it off to Floof, who proceeds to lick the kid in the face when he gets too close to the dog’s snout. Techno laughs as Tommy screams, and quietly, he’s happy to know Tommy has something that matches with him.

“Wilbur!” Phil calls, walking quickly to catch up. “Wil!” He can see Wilbur far down the street, map still held tightly in his hand as he runs far ahead, and Phil doesn’t doubt for a second that he’s near tears.

How could he not be? He had expected to find his little brother, and now, they’re faced with the dilemma of finding him in the hands of a stranger, who could be dangerous, cruel. Phil’s wondering how Wilbur is still even holding it together.

“Wil, mate!” Phil cups his hands around his mouth, and he spots Wilbur turn the corner, ducking away into a broken down building. Phil feels slight worry settle onto his shoulders. He’s got Wilbur’s axe, and while Wil does have a gun in his backpack, it’s still dangerous for him to be just rushing forward on his own.

He picks up the pace, running after Wil and following into the building, finding the remains of a place that once was. There’s papers all over the floor, glass shards scattered by the doorway, which crunch underneath his boots as he walks over them. It’s dark, and Phil takes a quick look around the place, before finding a lack of Wilbur.

There’s a hallway that leads further into the building. Phil sighs and goes down it, keeping an ear out for any nearby threats. He isn’t really fond of buildings like this where a stray zombie could be lurking in the shadows. No matter how many times he lives through it, it is always the same amount of terror whenever he gets grabbed by one.

“Wilbur?” Phil calls, and he slows into a stand still, listening close and hearing the quiet sound of a sob.

His heart squeezes a little in sympathy, and his feet are moving before he even thinks, Phil’s gaze sweeping down through the hallway, checking each dimly lit room before finding one that’s bright. As bright as it can be, with how gloomy it is outside.

Phil hovers by the doorway, frowning when he sees Wilbur curled up underneath the window, his face hidden away in his knees.

“Wil.” Phil says, and he’s answered with a pathetic, painful sob.

“Go away.” Wilbur chokes out, seeming to shrink in on himself, trying to be even smaller, hiding away beside the dim sunlight coming through the window. “I’ll be outside right now, just- Go.”

“Hey-”

“Get out!” Wilbur yells, but it comes out broken, and Phil hardly moves. “I-I just- I just need a minute. Or, or two.”

“Take all the time you need.” Phil answers, walking into the room towards Wilbur, steps light. “Mind if I sit?”

“Like I can stop you.” Wilbur mutters. Phil sits beside him carefully, placing the axe in his hand to the side on the ground.

For a moment, he listens for any noise, any undead groans that could signal danger, but it’s silent, and all that there is to hear is the light rainfall outside.

“I’m sorry we didn’t find him, mate.” Phil says, and Wilbur gives a pained noise, shoulders shaking. “I’m sorry.”

Wilbur doesn’t respond with any words, but his crying is answer enough, and Phil stays beside him, leaning his back against the wall.

“We’re closer now, though.” Phil says gently, tilting his head in thought. “We know where he is, and all we have to do is get through the city. Then, it’s just a matter of getting into the base, and finding him there.”

“If we can get through the city.” Wilbur sniffs, Phil smiling.

“We can. It’s a matter of being quiet and figuring out a way around.” Phil looks towards Wilbur, and sees him staring straight ahead, eyes focused on nothing in particular. “Cities are usually shit to even try traveling through, but I’ve had my own experiences with them. I’ve always gotten away fine.”

Wilbur narrows his eyes, wiping the back of his hand against his eyes as he huffs, shaking his head. So what if Phil is lucky? So what if he’s been through worse?

The thing is, Wilbur knows his own luck. It’s nothing like Phil’s.

“...You can leave, if you want.” Wilbur blurts out, and Phil freezes. “If you move fast enough you could probably catch up with Dream-”

“ *What ?*”

“This isn’t-” Wilbur sighs, his head hitting the wall as he pushes his palms up against his face. “God! Look, you came along to just find Tommy, not- not to go die in a horde. You don’t *have* to follow.”

“Yes, I do.” Phil scoffs, nearly offended. “You expect me to just turn around and leave?”

“I expect you to *live* .” Wilbur snaps. “Just, you’re a good person, and I know you help people. But you can’t help anyone else if you’re dead. And I know how hordes like this usually turn out. It’ll be smarter if I’m on my own, quieter, less risk-”

“And what if something goes wrong?” Phil demands, Wilbur scowling.

“Then I handle it!”

“And if you get hurt?!”

“Then I’ll *deal* with it-!”

“And what if you die?!” Phil stresses, Wilbur turning his head away, Phil pulling at his arm. “What then?! You’ll join the horde, you’ll be stuck in that city, and Tommy will wonder-”

“DO NOT -!” Wilbur grabs Phil by the front of the shirt, jostling him from where he’s sitting, but then he lets go just as quickly, lowering his head towards the floor. “-say that.” He finishes pathetically. “Don’t say that.”

Phil leans down with him, his hands settling over his shoulders as he rests his chin on Wilbur’s head. It’s nearly a hug, and Phil wants to give him a hug, but he’s not sure if he should.

“I’m going with you.” Phil says, with a tone of finality, no room for argument.

“Please don’t.” Wilbur grabs onto his sleeve, and Phil jerks away on reflex, before resettling his hand beside Wil’s. “Don’t.”

“There’s really nothing you can say that’s going to make me turn around.”

“ *Phil* .”

“I’m not letting you go by yourself.”

“Look, I’ve-” Wilbur lets out a bitter laugh, and it’s more of a sob, if anything. “I’ve already lost Tommy. And I have lost plenty of others long before him.”

“Wilbur.” Phil tries, and Wil ignores him as if Phil didn’t even say his name.

“I *really* don’t want you to die.” Wilbur admits, voice shaky and honest. “You’re a really good person, Phil. I can’t- I really rather not watch you die.”

“I’m not going to die, mate.” Phil grins, chuckling. “I’ve gotten this far, haven’t I? And you asked me to help, you wanted me to come along-”

“That was before I fucking got attached, Phil, shut up.” Wilbur swears, and Phil pauses. “Usually I don’t *care* , I’ve stopped fucking caring, because the only one who I needed to care about was Tommy, it was always Tommy, but you-” He raises his head. “You’re- Do you have any idea what kind of person you are? Hell, Phil, the stories you tell, you do so much and you care too much. There are far too little people like you in the apocalypse.”

Wilbur sighs, pulling away from Phil and putting distance between them. “I know how this usually goes. I have a bad track record with hordes, and an even worse one with survivor groups.”

“We’ll be lucky this time around.” Phil tries.

Wilbur scoffs. “My luck is shit.”

“Hey.” Phil leans towards Wilbur, and Wilbur turns his head to him, tears brimming in his eyes once more. Phil can’t help it this time, he reaches out and hugs him tight, and Wilbur thankfully leans right into him, shoving his face into Phil’s shoulder. “I’ll be alright. I’m always going to be alright, I’m not going anywhere. I promise.”

“That’s not a thing you can promise.” Wilbur whispers out, and Phil just laughs.

“I have a feeling I’ll keep it.” Phil hums, resting a hand over Wilbur’s back. “You still have to introduce me to Tommy, you know? You’ve told me so much about him, it’d be rude for you to just not let me meet him.”

“Oh, fuck off.” Wilbur breathes out, but he grins, even with the tears welling up in his eyes, the sharp guilt running through his veins. “Thank you, Phil. Really.”

“Like I’d let you go on your own.” Phil scoffs. “I’ll be here, mate.”

Wilbur sighs, and he thinks of the map that’s still in his possession, shoved into his backpack.

They agree to stay there for the night, until the rain lightens up and makes it easier to get by without getting soaked. Wilbur bullies Phil into resting while he takes first watch, and Phil begrudgingly agrees, laying down as Wilbur studies the map they’ve acquired.

It doesn’t take long for Phil to wake up and realize he’s alone.

“Wilbur?” Phil calls, sitting up with a rush, and he swears his heart jumps upon realizing Wil’s backpack isn’t beside him. His axe is gone and so is the map, and-

Goddamit, Phil honestly should've seen that coming.

“WILBUR!” Phil yells, running out of the building to go after his idiot, who's decided to try and get through the city on his own.

Chapter End Notes

eyyyy pls be easy on me it has been getting harder to write lolz

thanks for reading

Dark tunnels hold all your fears

There's a certain type of guilt that comes with surviving so long in the apocalypse.

Sure, you survive, and you get by, but you're bound to watch as others don't. Sometimes things go sideways, people break out into fights that don't calm down until someone is dead. Sometimes towns fall apart from the inside out, and survivors are reminded of the type of world they live in.

There's a reason they all think of each other as 'survivors', after all.

Phil knows he's lucky. Luckier than most. He gets by on his own, without a group, and he often wanders without staying in the safety of a town. He travels alone, into places that could result in his death.

He's reckless and impulsive and *kind*, and that is something that can get him killed. Not just by the zombies walking around outside, but also by the survivors trying to stick together, trying to get the best chance to live. Some wouldn't hesitate to take advantage of his kindness, they would rob him of all his supplies and of his life, if they could.

Phil's learnt to be just as brutal as he is kind. His first knee-jerk response to anyone in danger is to help, but he has always been one to not take any type of bullshit. He will not be taken advantage of.

The world has fallen into ruins and there's undead people walking in the streets, which means if anyone pisses Phil off, there's no one to *really* stop him if he just shoots them in the foot.

He's not cruel, not by any means, but he can be a little bit unrestrained, and he knows he's irresponsible in that way. He's irresponsible with his own life, with his own safety. Phil can't save everyone, but he can save some, at the cost of risking his well-being.

He doesn't mind the danger, but if he were smarter, he would think twice before jumping headfirst to save someone running right into a horde.

The city is large, and as Phil runs down the street, he doesn't spot a single zombie, but that doesn't mean he lets his guard down. He knows how hordes work, they tend to stick together, close packed. It's why they're so dangerous in the first place. They're difficult to get through.

If Wilbur gets caught in one, then he might not be as lucky as he was the first time.

There's a quiet voice in the back of Phil's head that tells him to turn around, leave Wilbur to his own choices and let him go on his own. He's dug his grave, now he can lay in it, and Phil will mourn the company of someone he cared for.

Phil tells the voice to fuck off, and runs faster.

To hell with common sense and basic survival instincts, if Wilbur is running right into the horde, Phil is going to be right behind him, because he cannot just let him be alone. He can't just leave Wilbur for dead. He won't.

He's never been one to stick with groups and actually keep company for long, but maybe he can make an exception, just this once. Maybe he won't need to travel alone anymore.

Wilbur deserves so much better, and Phil knows he can do it. Phil knows he can protect him, both him and Tommy, and they deserve that. He will give that.

It's the least he can do for them.

"Wilbur!" Phil calls, keeping an ear out for an answer, a scream, anything to signal where Wilbur might've gone. The streets are eerily empty, and Phil's steps echo a little too loudly as he

runs, puddles splashing underneath his feet.

The rain has settled a bit while he runs, but it begins to fall again, and it's cold against his skin. He ignores it easily, and turns the corner, Wilbur's name on the tip of his tongue.

He chokes back any sort of noise at the sight of the horde.

Phil stumbles, coming to a stop with wide eyes, and he scans the crowd first, before he lets any panic begin to slip through. He searches for a familiar face, a dirty beanie on brown hair, and he finds nothing. A small bit of comfort in the face of extreme danger.

It's a swarm of zombies ahead, all too close for Phil to even dream of getting through. If he tried to get past them, there is no chance in hell that he would get away without a few bites in his skin.

And even then, how far does it *go*? It seems to take up the entire street farther down, a whole block of just dead, rotting bodies shuffling around. Phil keeps his steps light as he goes behind cover, and thankfully, none of them seem to notice him. He's at a good enough distance for them to not hear, and the rain helps cover his noise.

So there's the horde. A lot closer than Phil first thought, but then again, he had been running like hell to catch up with Wilbur. Phil huffs as he scans the crowd once more and then heads off through the streets around the horde, combing through for any signs of Wilbur.

Phil tries to think. Wilbur might be desperate to find Tommy, but he's not stupid. He would go around, just like how Dream and the others did.

Although, going around the streets taken up would take a while, would be dangerous, and if Wilbur's trying to be quick, then maybe he went for some type of short cut. Maybe through the buildings, or-

Underneath the streets.

Phil stops in his tracks as he spots a familiar beanie on the ground, just beside an open manhole in the middle of the street.

“Oh, you fucking idiot.” Phil mutters under his breath, watching a stray zombie step onto Wil’s hat. “You’re so smart.” Phil adds on, even if Wilbur can’t hear.

The horde’s already moved over the hole, but Phil has a lead, so he’s making his way through. That’s not to say it’s going to be easy, though. There’s at least twenty, thirty zombies in between him and Wilbur, and Phil only has so much ammo. Even so, a single shot will alert the rest of them.

He has a small knife in his backpack, and he holds it tightly in his hand, keeping his gun in the other.

He should turn back. Phil is only one person, and Wilbur is just one survivor of many. Phil’s seen people die before. This should be no different. He doesn’t even need to see Wilbur pass, he just has to let go, and hope that maybe he got through.

Phil goes ahead anyway, and stabs a zombie right through the skull, ignoring the rain soaking into his clothes. Maybe it’ll keep the blood from staining.

Wilbur hates these sewers.

He hates it more than anything, even more than those undead monsters stumbling around outside. They took his beanie earlier, and he’s a little bitter over it, but better his hat than his life, he supposes.

He had been cutting that one a little too short. He shouldn't have gotten that close to the horde, but at least he wasn't grabbed. Instead, he got away, to this place, which might just be worse.

It smells *horrible* down here, something rotten and sour that makes him want to puke a little. The water underneath his feet is gross and dirty, flowing steadily from the rainfall outside, but still mixed with god knows what. He doesn't want to find out. All he knows is that he is not touching that.

Wilbur's seen rotting bodies and corpses before, so he likes to say he can handle the smell and the atmosphere. The actual worst part for him is how *dark* it is.

His hands keep shaking from where they're tightly held around his axe, and he wants to say that because of the cold, or the adrenaline, or maybe just because he's on guard, but he knows better. He knows that this is absolute hell for him.

He also knows that he's being a little bit of an idiot. The dark can't hurt him, it can't do anything. He is fine and he's alright, and he's out of the horde. He just has to get through. He just has to make his way across.

It doesn't lighten up the fear weighing on his shoulders.

Wil walks slowly, squinting through the dark and straining his ears for any stray zombies that might've stumbled their way down here. It's been clear for the most part, but he's careful about it. This place is small, dark. It's not easy to fight his way out in a spot like this.

There's a small bit of light up ahead, a grate from the street letting the sun through, and Wilbur goes towards it with a sigh of relief. It's not enough to chase away all the shadows, but it's enough to offer a scrap of comfort. It's a breath of fresh air, at least. Only metaphorically, though. It still stinks.

Just as Wil stands underneath the grate, watching the rainfall pour in and fall onto the ground into the stream of water around his ankles, he hears a bang.

A bang, another, and another after that.

Gunshots.

Wil's heart slams into his ribs as he gasps with panic, glancing behind him with wide eyes. There's someone in the horde? Who would be out here?

It's not Phil, Wilbur tells himself. Phil's smarter than that, he would've turned the other way when he realized Wilbur left him behind.

Right?

More shots sound out, echoing down the tunnel, and Wilbur takes in a ragged breath and heads forward, trying to convince himself it's not Phil at all. Because Phil is a survivor, he knows better. He knows that Wilbur's gone off towards his possible death, and if he is smart, then he will leave Wilbur to his own stupid choices.

Wilbur doesn't get a chance to run away from the noise, because a quiet groan sounds out from in front of him, and he stumbles back towards the light, axe held out in front of him.

There's slow, dragging footsteps, Wilbur taking each step back as it takes a step forward, and he watches as a zombie comes into view, dead and rotten and terrible.

It's not alone. There's two more behind it, giving an undead groan, and the moment they spot Wil, they lunge towards him.

Wilbur swings the axe forward, slamming it into the first zombie's head. It gets stuck, and Wilbur grunts as he drags the body forward, kicking his leg into its shoulder to yank the axe out. It falls onto the ground lifeless, and Wilbur swings again, just a moment too late as the zombie gets too close.

He's aimed badly, and the axe lands into the zombie's throat, rather than it's skull. He keeps taking steps back, away from the light and right into the dark, his back defenseless. He pulls at the axe, struggling to pull it out, and the zombie just keeps pushing him backwards, down the tunnel, away from the small opening of light.

Wilbur pushes the thing away, letting it keep the axe in its neck, and instead shrugging off his backpack to search for his gun. He keeps stepping backwards, keeps losing the light, and it's hard to even see what's inside his bag. With the way he's shaking, with the way he's struggling to breathe, it's difficult to even think straight. A few more gunshots ring out behind him, and it does not *help* .

He finds his gun, although he also then trips over something in the water, so he's falling backwards onto the ground, gun falling from his hands.

Fine. That's totally fine. This is handled.

Wilbur doesn't even bother searching through the dark water for his gun, he just reaches up to the zombie leaning down, and yanks at his axe again. The axe comes out, and it falls beside him, within reach. A chance.

He holds a hand out, grabbing the zombie by the throat and holding it back, making a frantic grab for the axe meanwhile. He has a hold onto it, but the zombie's weight falls right on top of him, and there's rotten blood flowing down his arm, soaking into his sleeve.

It's too close, far too close, and there's still another one behind it, and Wilbur screams and pushes it away, watching it try and bite at his face. He wants to kick it off, but if he lets go, he might give it a chance to sink into his arm, and he just needs a second to swing, but it's too close and it's too dark and he can't do this, he *can't*-

There's a loud bang that echoes through the tunnel, and Wilbur screams again as the zombie he's holding up is killed with a bullet to the head.

The blood splatters onto his face as he looks away, and he cries out in both disgust and horror, finally being able to let the zombie drop away from him. Another bang rings out, and Wilbur sobs, looking up and watching the zombie up ahead fall to the ground.

Hands grab at his arm, and Wilbur yells, pulling away and kicking his feet, but Phil doesn't let go. Instead, he pulls Wilbur out of the dark, underneath the grate where rainwater is pouring through, so that it's at least easier to see him.

"Stop- Stop, Wil, it's me! It's just me!" Phil reassures, as Wilbur continues to struggle against him, collapsing back onto the ground. Phil kneels down with him, leaning in close. "You're okay. Let me look at you, you're okay. You're okay."

"Phil-" Wilbur chokes out, and Phil smiles, something panicked and scared yet kind. Wilbur thinks it's wonderful. "*Phil-*"

"Look at me, look." Phil insists, placing his gun down beside him, placing all his current attention onto Wilbur and Wilbur alone. "Deep breaths."

Wilbur gasps for air, nodding frantically at Phil as he tries to get his lungs to cooperate. He feels like he's going to shake out of his skin, and Phil grabs at his hand, holding it tightly. He presses his other hand against Wilbur's face, continuing to speak through Wilbur's diminishing panic.

"You're alright, Wil. You're alright, it's alright. You're okay." Phil repeats, over and over until it starts to settle into Wilbur's mind and he struggles to breathe. Faintly, Wilbur processes the way Phil's taken his hand away from Wil's face to search around on his arms, his neck. Apparently, he doesn't find anything, because his face stays calm and he holds onto Will. "It was just a close call, mate, you're fine. Breathe, okay? You're okay."

Wilbur nods again, mouth opening and closing with no words coming out. There's the faint climb of crushing relief building up in his chest, and he tries to hold onto it, holds onto Phil.

He drops his head with slow breaths, trying to get his breathing under control, and he stares down at their hands, looks at the way Phil's fingers are smeared with blood, how Wilbur's

own hand has become stained with blood as well.

Fresh, red blood.

The relief gets thrown out the window. The panic comes searing back, like a roaring silence, and Wilbur breathes out shakily. Phil finally looks down, seeing that Wilbur is staring at his new injury.

Carefully pulling at Phil's wrist, Wilbur takes both hands and turns Phil's hand over, looking at the side of it, and finding jagged, bloody teeth marks into Phil's skin.

He's bit.

Phil's bit, Wilbur numbly realizes.

"Oh *fuck*."

loud screaming

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Phil curls his fingers closed around Wilbur's hand, tugging at Wil to try and get him to look towards him, but Wilbur can't rip his eyes away from the bite mark. He just stares, eyes wide, tears threatening to come back in full force with the rising panic that's filling his head.

"It's fine, mate." Phil speaks gently, as if Wilbur needs to be comforted, when really it should be the other way around. It should be Wilbur comforting Phil, not this, Wilbur's not the one who's going to die, Wil isn't the one who's *infected* .

"Phil." Wilbur whispers, like he's trying to keep quiet, and there's no stopping the sheer horror that flows right through him. His hands keep trembling beside Phil's, and it's not from the cold nor the adrenaline, it's from fear. He wipes off the blood on Phil's palm, trying to make the entire injury just disappear, but no matter how many times he tries to clean it off, the bite still stays. "No, no, nonono--"

What does he do? What *can* he do? Wilbur knows the effect of a zombie bite, he knows how quickly they spread. He's familiar with how quickly they can take a person, and how it can take Phil just as quick.

Three days.

That's all Phil has left.

But there's a *chance* -

A small chance, but a chance nevertheless. Wilbur has only ever met one person who was actually bit and survived through it, but that person had lost an arm. He would hate for Phil to

go through that, but he would hate it even more if he had to lose Phil entirely.

“How- How long has it been since you got this?” Wilbur asks, his voice a touch desperate. He lifts his head to look Phil in the eye, and Phil just gives a soft smile. It makes Wilbur want to burst into tears and scream. He grits his teeth and tries to breathe instead.

“Wilbur-” Phil tries to say, and Wilbur grabs him by the arms, fingers digging into his sleeves.

“How long?!” Wilbur yells, looking around in the sewer water for where he had dropped his axe earlier. He goes to stand up. “We have to- Where’s my axe? I can-”

“Wilbur, no-” Phil pulls him back down, and Wilbur tries to push him off. “Stop, stop.”

“We still have time! I-I know someone who lived through a bite before, they had to cut off the infection before it spread-” Wilbur explains, words scattered as he tries to get away from Phil to search through the muddy water.

“We’re not cutting off my arm!” Phil protests, and Wilbur gets yanked back by the shirt, stumbling. He tries to pull Phil’s hand off, to no avail. “Come here, stop-”

“Well, would you rather die?!” Wilbur yells, voice wavering. “Because that’s the other choice, and I don’t *want* that-”

“ *Wilbur !*” Phil snaps, voice sharp, and Wilbur pauses, listening to Phil’s voice echo down the tunnels for just a moment. Phil tugs at him again, and he practically collapses back onto the ground, Phil holding him still in case he tries to go for his axe again. “Listen to me.”

Wilbur looks at him with a barely held back sob, guilt clawing into his back. He looks anywhere but the hand on his shoulder, and he wants so badly to convince himself that if he just pretends it’s not there, then it’s not there. Then Phil isn’t hurt. Then he didn’t fuck it all up.

“Why didn’t you just *go* ?” Wilbur asks, a broken cry coming from his throat. “Why did you follow me, you wouldn’t have gotten hurt if you-”

“I’m not going to just let you run off and die, mate.” Phil responds, and while he’s aiming to sound lighthearted, he misses the mark. He pulls Wilbur closer, resting his forehead against Wil’s, and Wilbur just closes his eyes with another small sob. “I’m going to be alright, it’s fine. I’m fine.”

“You’re bit.” Wilbur breathes out.

“I know.”

“You’re *infected* .” Wilbur cries, and Phil only laughs under his breath, a quiet smile on his face.

“I-” Phil hesitates. “I have been the whole time.”

Wilbur opens his eyes, pausing, and Phil pulls away before he can even get a question out. He begins to roll up his sleeve, talking quickly with a slight nervousness that only makes Wilbur confused.

“It’s not- I never exactly meant to keep it from you, but most reactions never went well, and I grew out of telling people about it, so I just never brought it up-” Phil rambles, pulling his sleeve up past his elbow to show his right arm. “I-” He stops abruptly, looking towards Wilbur with something hesitant.

He’s scared.

And he has a healed bite wound on his right arm.

There's little divots in his skin, just beside the crook of his elbow, as if long ago something tore into his flesh. Wilbur knows exactly what it is at first glance, he knows very well what caused it, but he can't quite process the fact that it's *healed*. He's never seen that before. No one's ever lived long enough to have it heal over.

"It's a year old." Phil says, and Wilbur swears he stops breathing for a moment. "I've been bit twice already and it did nothing, Wilbur. This-" He holds up his left hand, where his palm is still bloody. "This isn't going to do anything either."

"You're-" Wilbur chokes out, and Phil nods a bit. "You mean-?"

"I said I was going to stay." Phil carefully grins. "Did you think-" Wilbur slams into him, pulling him into a tight hug.

Phil nearly falls backwards into the water underneath them, and he laughs, wrapping his arms around Wilbur and holding him closer, resting his cheek against Wilbur's head as Wilbur buries his face into Phil's shoulder. Wilbur cries into his shirt, not quite believing it yet also feeling so relieved. His head spins, and he can't breathe, but he's never felt quite so alive.

"You *fucking* -" Wilbur's voice breaks, and he struggles to get out the words past the way he's still sobbing. "You're such an idiot, you're such an *idiot*, Phil-"

"Says the one who went into a horde!" Phil responds, pushing Wilbur back just for a moment to look him in the face. "You just fucking went on alone-!"

"You followed!" Wilbur cries, and Phil laughs, hugging Wilbur close again. "You're so stupid, you're- You're the *worst* fucking idiot I have ever met-"

"Mate." Phil snorts, Wilbur continuing to say nonsense while still non-stop crying into his shirt.

“I can’t believe you, I can’t believe you...” Wilbur takes a sharp breath in, shaking his head.
“I can’t believe this.”

“What are the chances, huh.” Phil says.

“Immunity!” Wilbur yells, sitting up away from Phil, slapping his hands to his own head.
“How can-? Of all people! Of all people.”

“I know.” Phil smiles, and his voice goes soft. “Sometimes I still don’t quite believe it.” He glances down to the scar on his arm, pressing a thumb against it, and leaving a small smear of blood.

It’s been a long while since he first got bit, but he doesn’t think he’ll ever forget the raw panic and fear of being convinced he was done for. With the horde grabbing at him, and the smoke filling up the car-

He’ll never forget how he sent Techno away.

And he will never regret it, either.

Now he knows better, and now he knows a horde won’t be his end that quickly, but if he had asked for Technoblade to stay, he knows that Techno would’ve died right there beside him.

Phil pulls the sleeve back down with a huff, and reaches behind him to his backpack, pulling out a beanie that has seen better days.

“I got your hat.” Phil smiles, and he sits up to tug it over Wilbur’s head, Wil laughing lightly as he goes to adjust it properly.

The beanie is wet and a little bloody, but it’s not as if Wilbur is faring any better. He’s soaked with the rainwater from the sewer, and there’s zombie blood splattered across his face and

shirt. Phil won't lie, he looks like shit, especially with the way he's still trying to stop crying.

Phil supposes he doesn't have any place to judge. He's got zombie guts all over his clothes.

"Thanks." Wilbur says, pushing his hair out of his face, looking at Phil with a shaky smile. "Thank you." It feels like he's thanking Phil for more than just the hat.

"No problem, mate." Phil responds, picking up his gun out of the water and climbing to his feet. He glances at the dead zombies splayed out across the ground, and wonders if there are any more up ahead.

Well, at least he knows he can deal with them for Wilbur.

"I dropped my gun somewhere." Wil says, looking around with a frown, and Phil holds a hand out to him, helping him stand. "My axe is over here, I think."

"You really had to pick the sewer to travel through." Phil mutters, walking past Wilbur to look for the gun he had dropped as Wilbur retrieves the axe from the ground. He shakes the water off it with a grossed out face.

"It's faster than going around!" Wilbur points out, and Phil still rolls his eyes fondly.

"Yeah, but it's fucking gross."

"You're right about that." Wil sighs, Phil finding Wilbur's gun and taking it out from the water, putting it into his bag. He needs to clean these later. But for now, they just need to find another manhole out into somewhere that isn't in the middle of a horde.

"Come on." Phil nods, holding out a hand and pulling Wilbur along when he takes it. "Stay behind me, alright?"

Wilbur frowns, glancing back with the slightest bit of nervousness as they begin to walk away from the light. “Hey. Just because you’re apparently immune doesn’t mean-”

“Wilbur?” Phil stops, turning to him. “Might I remind you, you just got up and ran off into a horde, leaving me in my sleep?”

Wilbur’s frown turns sour, and a little guilty.

“I don’t think you’re in any spot to be arguing at the moment.”

“Fine.” Wilbur agrees, although clearly not happy over it. Phil hums, walking again. “I’m sorry, by the way.”

“It’s alright.” Phil shrugs. “Just don’t leave again? I said I’ll stay, but you need to stay too. You can’t do that again.” He glances back towards Wil. “You scared me, you know?”

“I thought-” Wilbur pauses. “I just didn’t want to put you in any danger.”

“You went into a *horde* .”

“You didn’t have to follow!” Wilbur replies. “You could’ve just gone ‘oh, guess Wilbur left’ and not actually come *after* me.”

“Like hell I’m just going to leave after knowing you ran off somewhere dangerous.” Phil scoffs into the dark, squeezing Wil’s hand. “What if you got hurt?”

Wilbur doesn’t respond, but the silence feels like an answer all on its own.

“I’m not leaving you behind.” Phil says, and that’s that.

“I’m sorry.” Wilbur repeats, quieter this time.

“It’s okay.”

“It wouldn’t have been if you weren’t immune.” Wilbur points out, and Phil tugs at his hand, making him stumble a little.

“Sh. I’m fine. You’re okay, I just have a small scratch on my hand, everything turned out alright.”

“That’s not a *scratch* -”

“It’ll heal.” Phil says breezily, and Wilbur rolls his eyes in the dark. “I’ve had worse.”

“You have.” Wilbur sighs, and Phil’s not sure how to place that tone.

They continue walking for a while, coming across a few grates here and there, spots of light that give slight comfort as they continue to walk. There’s a zombie or two in their way, but Phil hacks at them with Wilbur’s axe, and they hardly even pose as a threat. Wil feels slightly annoyed at the fact he’s just hiding behind Phil while he takes care of the zombies, but there’s also a small part of him that’s relieved to have some kind of safety in this horrid sewer.

Eventually, they come across another manhole, Phil insisting on checking first to see if it’ll lead them right into the middle of a horde or not.

Apparently, it doesn’t, but it’s not entirely safe, a few zombies too close for comfort. Phil borrows Wilbur’s axe, and heads out first to clear the area, telling Wilbur to stay behind.

“Phil.” Wilbur calls, head tilted up where the light is coming through.

“Just give me a minute, Wil, just a minute.” Phil reassures, pulling himself out onto the ground outside. “I’ll make it quick.” He promises, and Wilbur huffs, but listens.

He doesn’t really want to argue anyway. He can wait for a minute, he can handle that. He’s been through much worse than just standing around for a solid minute, waiting for-

“Heads up!” Phil yells, and there’s a zombie falling through the entrance of the sewer, splashing into the shallow water, lifeless. Wilbur jolts back with a scream. “Sorry!”

Wilbur gives an annoyed glare towards Phil, but he’s already gone off to take care of the zombies.

He keeps a distance from the body, poking at it with his foot, but he finds it to be completely still. There’s a wound on the side of its head, courtesy of Phil, and when Wilbur looks up again, he sees Phil leaning over the manhole with a grin, panting a bit.

“Okay. Coast is clear, hurry up.” He calls, and Wilbur nods, stepping over the body and grabbing onto the ladder, climbing up as fast he can, just to get out of this horrid sewer already. Phil reaches a hand down to help him up the rest of the way, and Wilbur takes it, letting Phil pull him out.

Chapter End Notes

all of you have like one braincell and you REALLY were using it for that last chapter
WHEEEEEZE

thank you so much for reading, hope you liked this chapter, sorry it's short haha

You are my daaad, you're my dad! Boogie woogie woogie

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Wilbur climbs out into a small alleyway, cramped and dirty with a rotting smell in the air. It's not as bad as the sewer, but it still makes him scrunch his nose up with disgust. It's unpleasant, and he's reminded again how badly he craves for a proper shower.

There's bodies laying on the ground at their feet, their heads nothing more than bashed up zombie remains. It's only a few of them, but Wilbur can still see the force behind those swings, the sheer rush of making sure they were dead and gone.

Wil gives a glance to Phil, noting just how blood soaked he is. There's guts and gore sticking to his boots, his sleeves, his shirt. He could almost pass as a zombie, if his face was a little dirtier.

Wilbur huffs underneath his breath at the thought. It's still too soon for him to rip away the panic of nearly losing Phil, but a stray joke of Phil being a zombie is somewhere in the back of his head. A zombie killing a zombie. What counts as a zombie, really? Would Phil even meet those requirements?

Wilbur's too tired to be thoughtful.

Zombies are still stumbling around in the road nearby, and it's not anywhere near safe for them to be in the open-- for *Wil* to be in the open. The buildings are a poor choice for shelter, he knows from experience that can lead to him being trapped, but Wilbur would rather have anything else other than the sewer he just escaped from. At least, somewhere up here, he won't be in the dark.

At least up here, he's not alone.

Phil heads along towards a fire escape, the ladder already pulled down. He looks back at Wilbur to make sure he's following close, and when Wil stumbles a bit too slowly for comfort, he circles around him and pushes him forward to climb up the ladder first.

"Go on, mate." Phil encourages, eyes set on the horde out in the street, too close, their undead cries audible from just here. The metal bars rattle as Wilbur grabs on, and he knows instantly that it's too loud. He's grown accustomed to knowing which noises are threats and which are not. This one definitely just set off his fight or flight instincts.

The sound is enough to attract a couple strays in their direction, and Phil keeps his attention on them, while also pushing Wilbur to keep climbing.

"Try goin' for one of those windows." Phil suggests, only staring down the corpses shuffling towards him. He doesn't seem perturbed by the sight of them or of how close they are, but Wil's anxiety is already clawing its way up his throat, suffocating and terrible.

Wilbur climbs with a panicked breath, trying to focus and do exactly what he's been told. The rain is still falling from the sky as he goes, and he can feel it soak into his clothes, cold and wet. While he's never been too fond of staying out in the cold in situations like this, he'll admit, the chill is refreshing against his skin.

The metal underneath his feet creaks as he stands up, and he ignores it in favor of going to the first window. He tugs at it to pull it open, and gets no results. It's locked.

His first instinct is to just break it, but he doesn't want any sort of noise at all at the moment, so he automatically just moves on towards the next floor, hearing the screech of Phil pulling the ladder back up. Wil flinches with the noise, and out of habit, keeps his footsteps light, slow.

"Wil!" Phil calls, and Wilbur's already gone to the next window, pulling at it and finding it locked once more. He glances inside and finds an awful lot of blood on the ground. Maybe not this one.

“First one was locked. Second one isn’t good.” Wil says plainly, telling himself to not look off over the railing, into the street. He repeats to himself to not stare into the horde, and thinks of the danger it holds. He’s had enough thoughts for the day. He’s had enough danger. He just needs someplace safe.

“Wait up!” Phil yells, and Wilbur’s trying at the third window. It looks empty on the inside. Nothing too bad, no movement to show any strays, waiting to kill him.

He pushes at the window, and it budes, just a bit, but it doesn’t open. He huffs, looking up for the next one. Wouldn’t it be safer for them to be higher, anyway? Why not the highest window they can reach, the farthest they could be from the zombie infested horde?

“Wilbur.” Phil sighs, Wil turning to find Phil making his way up the stairs, finally catching up. He stands close with an amused smile, and Wil tries to offer a grin back. It’s more like he’s baring his teeth, if anything. “I thought I told you to stay close earlier.”

“You said to stay behind you. And that was for the sewers.” Wilbur points out, aiming to head up the next set of stairs. Phil catches onto his sleeve at the last moment, preventing him from climbing any further. “What?”

“We’re really going to need to have a talk.” Phil huffs, and while the implications of those words could mean something bad, disagreement or splitting up, Phil’s tone makes it out to be something else. Wilbur only finds himself to be curious, rather than worried.

“About what?” Wil slowly asks, hesitant.

Phil lets Wilbur’s sleeve go, and focuses towards the window. He observes it for a second, leaning down and peeking inside. “About getting through the city.” He stands up straight, leveling Wilbur with a look.

“What is with that face?”

Phil snorts. Then he holds up Wilbur's axe with purpose, and Wil doesn't have any time to tell him to wait before the window is broken with a loud shatter. Wilbur jumps with the sound, and his eyes glance to the zombies underneath them, stumbling around in the alleyway. He hears a quiet dead groan travel up to his ears.

He tries to pretend he's not put off by it. He's seen hundreds of zombies before. Why would he be scared of these ones? He shouldn't be.

"Come on." Phil says, reaching through the broken glass to unlatch the lock, sliding the window open. Wilbur follows right behind him, trying to shake off the fear that keeps threatening to sink into his bones.

It's quiet inside, dry, safe from the cold and the rain. They've stepped into a place that might've once been a home, but by now it's dusty and dirty, and it's clearly been ransacked at some point, with how there's some furniture tipped over on the ground, things missing.

Phil whistles in the air, like he's calling a dog from afar, but there's nothing to be called. He waits for a moment, and seems satisfied with the silence, and only now does Wilbur realize he was probably checking for any sort of response. A zombie would've tried making itself known upon hearing a noise nearby. A survivor might've called out to answer back.

No one is in here though, thankfully, and Wilbur observes his surroundings and listens to the rain outside as Phil makes his way further into the home. The inhabitants had long since left this place behind. Maybe they're dead. Maybe they're alive, in some far off town. Wilbur couldn't care less, if he's being honest. He just hopes there's something left behind for them to have.

Maybe a clean shirt. Something that isn't bloodstained and soaked with sewer water.

As Phil goes towards the kitchen, Wilbur makes his way into the hallway, a direct beeline to one of the rooms here so he can hopefully find a clean towel, at the very least. He still has blood splattered across his face, remains of a zombie being far too close for comfort, and he wants it off.

The first room he peeks his head into looks like a mess, the window being shattered with rainwater falling in. It's a normal bedroom, tiny dead plants scattered around with books all along the shelves and a bloodstain smeared across the floor. It's old, thankfully, and Wilbur stares at it for a little longer than needed before moving on. He doesn't want to enter that room. There's an untold story within those walls, and he doesn't want to think about it.

The second room is better. There's posters hung up on the walls, things that Wilbur doesn't really recognize, and he observes them for just a second before moving on. A bed sits in the middle of the room, the blankets clean, and there's a closet to the side, hanging open, just waiting for someone to search through it once again.

Wil pushes the closet doors completely open, searching through the hangers to see if any of the shirts might be good enough for him to borrow. They're all a bit silly, t-shirts with designs on the front. Wilbur pulls out a shirt with a cat on it, and he huffs at the look of it, shaking his head. Whoever did wear these, their sense of fashion was interesting, that's for sure.

The closet is mostly organized, but there's a few more clothes laying by the ground in front of Wilbur's feet, and he reaches down to look through those too, just to see if they have anything amusing on them as well.

They're wrinkled and a little worn, and Wilbur holds up a single shirt in his hands, finding it to be far smaller than the others. Child-sized.

Like...

It's like a bat to the face, how quickly the realization hits him and wrecks his entire composure.

He tries to keep his mind from jumping to memories, but it's far too late, and the second he thinks of Tommy, all he can feel is the crushing weight of bitter failure, and terrifying possibilities of what might've happened, if Wilbur was just a little less lucky.

The fear is back, it's back in unimaginable waves, and it feels as if he's returned to that disgusting sewer all over again, back in the dark, back with the threat of getting bit, being

alone.

He drops the shirt as if it's burnt him, standing up quickly and stumbling back. His breaths come too quick, a lump in his throat, and he holds a hand to his face, turning away from the closet entirely. His hands are shaking from where he's holding them up against his mouth, and he feels sick.

Forcing his thoughts to get back on track is much easier said than done, and Wilbur tries, he really does, but once the floodgates open, there's no stopping it. There's no distraction in this room, nothing to keep him from truly processing how he could've *died*, in those tunnels. He could've gotten bit and been torn apart and his body would be stuck there until it rotted away into nothing.

The thought of death isn't what scares Wilbur. No, what really makes him feel sick to his stomach with absolute dread is the idea of never returning back to Tommy.

If he dies, then what happens to his little brother?

Wilbur forces himself to sit down on the bed, the frame creaking as he rests his weight on it. He can't breathe, and a broken sob is ripped out from his throat as he considers how close he was to leaving Tommy behind. Because that is what would've happened, that is what death is to Wilbur. The worst possible thing for him is leaving Tommy behind, leaving him to think that Wil never tried to get back to him.

"Wilbur?" Phil calls out, far down the hallway, and Wil furiously scrubs at his face, trying to push away the tightness that's holding his heart hostage.

Why does he have to go crying now? Right when they're getting back on track, right when they're doing well, all he can do is think of how everything might've gone so wrong. All he can think of is Tommy, past this horde, so close and yet so fucking far, and he can't take it-

"Wil?" Phil calls again, persistent.

“Over- Over here.” Wilbur responds, and his voice sounds far too strained, even with how he tries to make it steady. He holds his breath and tries to stop the tears flowing down his face, but he’s on a downhill slope with his emotions, so there’s no use in trying to stop the momentum now. He only ends up crying harder, gasping for air.

“Are you okay?” Phil asks, his voice traveling down the hall. Wilbur really doesn’t want him to see him crying again, but he’d also give anything for Phil’s company at the moment. It’s all he got.

“Yup.” Wilbur chokes out, a blatant lie, and he gives out a laugh that devolves into a sob. “No, I’m-” He buries his face into his palms with a hiccup.

“Wil?” Phil says once more, hovering by the doorway, and he makes a sympathetic noise as Wilbur curled up on himself once more, a near repeat of last time. “Oh.”

“Hi.” Wil croaks out, leaning in over his knees, head tilted down towards the floor. “I’m sorry, I don’t know-” His throat closes up with fear rippling through him, and he squeezes his eyes shut. “I’m sorry.”

“You have nothing to apologize for.” Phil reassures, walking into the room and taking a seat right beside Wilbur on the bed. Wil can feel the dip in the mattress beside him, but he can’t bring himself to raise his head. “Hey. Wil.”

“I-I was just looking through the closet.” Wilbur whispers, something broken in his voice. It sounds like he’s desperately trying to justify his reaction, trying to put a proper excuse to his tears, but it isn’t as if he really needs one. “I was just...”

Phil rests a hand on his shoulder, hesitant, and when Wilbur doesn’t push him away, he rubs his palm against Wilbur’s back, trying to be comforting. It helps, a little.

“It’s alright.” Phil says softly, voice quiet. Quiet enough to be hidden away from the zombies outside. Quiet enough to be safe. It settles something at the back of Wilbur’s mind.

“There was this- tiny shirt...” Wilbur murmurs out, eyes still kept closed. The words feel like too much in his mouth, and he wishes he didn’t say it at all. All he sees is Tommy, his smile and his dirty little face, and he forces his eyes open so he won’t have to see those images behind his eyelids. His vision of the floor is blurred, and he watches as a tear falls right beside his own foot.

Phil leans in from Wilbur’s side, his hand still resting on his back, and it’s almost like a hug. Wilbur thinks he could go for a hug right about now.

“He’s okay, mate.” Phil promises, but Wilbur just shakes his head. “We’ll get to him.”

“We don’t know that.” Wilbur laughs, and it’s something bitter, something full of grief. He doesn’t want to dare begin to mourn, he can’t take the thought of Tommy being gone. But this is a loss either way. Because Tommy is still not here, still out of reach, and Wilbur almost lost him. “Fuck, I’m- I’m sorry.”

“For what? I’d be worried if you *weren’t* upset over this, Wil. It’s alright to be dissapointed.”

“I’ve already cried once.” Wilbur mutters, as if that one time was enough to hold back the sheer despair this day holds.

“And you’ll cry plenty times more.” Phil says. “I understand, Wil. Maybe not with the loss exactly, but I understand how hard it hits. I think you’re well deserving of a moment to cry.”

“You’ve ever lost someone?” Wilbur asks, a sudden question, just something to try and distract his mind.

Phil stays quiet for a moment. “I’ve lost many.” He confesses, an exhaustion weighing in his tone. “But Tommy isn’t lost, you know.” He rests against Wilbur, a solid weight against his side.

Wilbur squeezes his eyes shut, sees flashes of the very face he loves most in this fucked up world, and he opens his eyes again with a pathetic sob. “He could’ve been.”

“If Dream’s word was true-”

“-Then Tommy is okay, but it’s another matter entirely of actually getting to him!” Wilbur shouts, sitting up quickly, Phil taking his hand away. “I could’ve died. I could’ve gotten bit, in that tunnel, and that would’ve been it. A timer until I turned.” And then maybe Wilbur wouldn’t have ever made it out before his time was up.

“But that didn’t happen.” Phil sternly reminds. “I got there.”

“You shouldn’t have been there at all.” Wilbur says under his breath, a hand over his face, and Phil grabs him by the arm, his grip too tight.

Wil goes still, and Phil doesn’t say anything, but he can practically feel a burning stare at the side of his head. Silence drags on, and Wilbur tries to blink tears out of his eyes.

“I’d rather go through the horde all over again than let you go on your own.” Phil finally says, after a long moment. The tears come back with a rush, and Wilbur can feel himself shake as he bites his tongue to try and hold back a sob.

“I’m sorry.” Wilbur apologizes, eyes meeting Phil’s for just a moment, before he lowers his head back down, at his own dirty, blood-covered hands. “I’m sorry.” He whispers.

“Wil.”

“I know I shouldn’t have left, and I should’ve thought ahead, but I- I just thought-”

“*Wilbur.*” Phil stresses, and he grabs Wil’s face with both of his hands, forcing him to lift his head up. “It’s okay. We’re okay, we’re both alive, it’s fine. And we’re going to be just fine.”

He ignores the way Wilbur lightly rests his fingertips against his wrists, hands shaking. “I’m not going to let you die.”

Wilbur stares with an expression that’s nearly baffled, and with the way he’s still crying, he looks as if he can’t physically handle any of Phil’s words, or even just his presence.

Phil seems to hardly notice the quiet shock coming from Wilbur. He instead pulls his hands away, reaching towards something beside him, and Wilbur hadn’t even been looking towards him when he came in, he didn’t even notice how Phil came back from the kitchen with a small towel in his hands.

He shrugs off his bag, pulling out a bottle of water as he continues to talk to Wil.

“Listen. I want you to understand that you are getting out of this city *unharm*ed. I can handle a few extra scars. But Tommy can’t go on without you.” He pours water out onto the towel in his hand, putting the bottle down beside his feet, on the ground. “I know you miss him. And I don’t doubt for a second that he misses you too. So you are going to get back to him, and I want to meet him, and I want to watch when you get to hug him again.”

Phil raises the towel up to Wilbur’s face, scrubbing off the blood that’s been stained on his skin. Wilbur’s hand hovers mid-air to take the towel himself, but he decides against it, and instead just stays still, face scrunching up a bit as Phil cleans off the dirt on his nose.

“You have to stay close, mate. Stay underneath my wing, okay? I’m immune. I can take on the horde. You can’t. So you have to stay behind me.”

“I’m not going to use you as some sort of shield-” Wilbur protests, and he frowns as he tries to lean away, Phil only continuing to earnestly get rid of the blood on his forehead. “I can survive on my own.”

“You don’t need to, though.” Phil points out, and he finally lets go of Wil, seeming satisfied enough with his work. Wilbur sniffs. “I know you’ve been on your own. I have been too. But for now, can we try and stay together?”

“I won’t go running again.” Wilbur promises, and it sounds a bit weak. “Really.” He adds. It doesn’t help his case.

Phil just gives a quiet laugh. “Okay. Just stay, alright? Just stay.”

Wilbur nods, for lack of any proper words to give.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry for the short chap!! I have been busy being a smart kid and studying in skool so I have less time for the silly fanfiction

BUT I am trying my best to get on top of updates again!! Thank you for the patience and thank you for reading :D

Blanket forts, my beloved

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“I’m bored.”

Techno pauses in his writing. He glances away from his journal, just for a second, seeing Tommy is still where he’s been for the past ten minutes: on the kitchen floor beside Floof.

You would think the ground would be rather uncomfortable, and maybe a little cold, but no matter how much Techno suggests for him to sit in an actual chair, Tommy will refuse and say that the ground is just as good.

‘It’s clean’ he argues. (Which only makes Techno wonder where Tommy’s slept before all of this, for his standards to be this low.)

‘I’ve got to give Floof company’ he also argues. (Techno won’t protest against that one. That seems like a fairly good reason to lay on the ground, in his opinion.)

‘The ground lets me hear secrets’ was also another point to Tommy’s choice. (Techno doesn’t even *know* what that one means.)

Technoblade gives his attention back to his journal, scribbling down another sentence that comes to mind. This one is a special entry, mostly centered over Tommy and his current cosmetic choices.

To be honest, a lot of his entries these days are starting to be mostly about Tommy. He won’t complain.

Techno spares another glance, and smiles at seeing the pink puff of hair sitting over Tommy's forehead. It looks a little weird amongst the rest of Tommy's blond hair, but who in the apocalypse is going to judge?

As far as Tommy is concerned, he is the most good-looking man in the world, Technoblade being an honorable seventh best-looking man in the world. Wilbur is last place, he's been told. Technoblade feels a bit of smugness at being ranked higher than Wil. He's never seen the guy in his life, but in this, he wins.

"Techno, I'm *bored* ." Tommy says again, pulling Techno out of his thoughts. The kid turns over on his side, reaching out a hand to pat at Floof's fur, the dog seeming very happy with the pets given.

Technoblade hums. "Good for you."

"I'm bored, Technoblade." Tommy repeats, groaning with his face buried into Floof's fur. Technoblade looks away from his writing for just a moment, and his eyes land back onto that pink piece of hair. "I'm boreeed." He drags out the word in a groan, throwing an arm over Floof. The dog doesn't seem to really mind all that much, simply just glad for Tommy to be beside him.

"And what am I supposed to do about that?" Techno asks, his tone being indifferent, but his actions speaking differently. He closes his journal, putting his pen to the side to give his full attention to Tommy, who gives a long suffered sigh.

"Something!" Tommy yells. He lifts his head, just enough to look over Floof's fluffy white fur. "I wanna do something."

"Haven't you done plenty?" Techno asks, turning in his chair with a raised eyebrow. He isn't wrong. Tommy's gone and danced in the rain, he's taken a long nap, he's dyed his hair, brushed his hair, brushed Techno's hair, tried to braid Techno's hair for a second time, and now he sits on the kitchen floor, doing nothing. "We could try going out on patrol." He offers, listening out for the rain. It might still be coming down pretty hard. Maybe not.

Besides, it'll be sundown pretty soon. They've spent the day lazing around, maybe it's too late to be productive now.

"No." Tommy huffs. "No walking. No doing stuff."

Techno blinks.

"I'm bored." Tommy declares once again, rolling over onto his back. Technoblade rolls his eyes with a fond scoff, sitting forward in his chair again. He doesn't go reaching for his journal, though, and instead just sits back and listens to Tommy. "I'm bored, I'm bored, Techno, I'm bored."

"You just said you didn't want to do stuff." Techno points out.

"I didn't want to do *patrol* stuff. It's a rainy day, which means we don't do work." Tommy says, like that's just a law of the land that Techno should know. Techno nods slowly with the words.

"Well, what do you usually do on rainy days?" Techno asks, crossing his arms and turning his head over to Tommy. "What did you and Wilbur do, other than go dancing out in the rain?"

"Watched movies." Tommy responds. "But there's no more movies. We used to, used to...play guitar. He played guitar." He would play songs for Tommy, singing softly with the sound of the rain outside their window.

Tommy misses the sound of Wilbur's voice.

"I don't think I have a guitar." Technoblade says. He makes a metal note to go searching for one. He's never played guitar in his life, but having something familiar to Tommy would be good, probably. "And I don't have movies." He thinks. "I have books."

“I don’t want to read.” Tommy frowns.

“Do you want to listen?” Techno offers. He knows he has a few books stored around somewhere, he’s read them front and back too many times to count, and he’s put them to the side at this point because of how many times he’s read them. He’s kept himself busy with chores, these days, rather than literature. “I’ll read for you.”

Tommy’s quiet for a second, but he lifts his head in curiosity, eyes narrowed up at Techno. “What type of story is it?”

Wilbur sighs with exhaustion settled deep in his bones, flopping onto his back on the bed. He’s cried himself out for the day, he thinks.

This place has been deemed good enough for him and Phil to stay for the night, and while there wasn’t very much in terms of food and such, it is still good as shelter. Wilbur can’t remember the last time he slept in a proper bed like this one. He thinks he’ll savor it.

Phil was able to look through the apartment for some clean clothes for them both, and also he set out a bunch of metal pots on the fire escape to catch rainwater outside, just so they could try cleaning their hats and coats with it later. Wilbur knows his beanie could definitely use a wash, even with just rain water. Having it soaked with a bit of dirt is far better than having it stained with blood and sewage water.

Wilbur’s face and hands are clean, but he’s still got the smell of rotting zombie sticking to him, and he scrunches his nose up at it and tries to pretend it doesn’t exist. At least he knows he’s not wearing blood-stained clothes anymore. It’s probably just his hair that needs a wash.

The clothes Wilbur has on right now don’t really fit, but they’re good enough and they’re actually kinda comfortable. However, he’s definitely not going out into the city with these.

He's seen far too much in the apocalypse to feel shame over bad fashion choices, but even then, he knows that having bright pink pajama pants is definitely not a good look on him. Phil had thought the comfy clothes would be nice, just for the night. Wilbur's hardly in the mood to disagree, even if the color clash is rather drastic. He's got a shirt that has a picture of a cat on it.

If Tommy could see him now, he'd be laughing, most likely. How Wilbur misses that laugh.

Turning his face into the pillow beside him, Wilbur huffs as he curls up on his side, staring at the wall and watching the light slowly fade out from the room. There's still some dim light, the sun hardly showing through all these rainclouds, but Wilbur can tell that the day has passed, by now. It must be sundown, or near there.

He feels far too tired for how early it is. Maybe it's just because of all the tears he's shed. He sobbed in Phil's arms for what had to be at least an hour, and he won't lie, he feels a little better after doing so. There's still a weight on his chest, an irremovable worry, but at least it's not eating him whole.

Wilbur can hear Phil's steps walk through the apartment, pacing back and forth from the window they came through to somewhere down the hall. The steps are repetitive, and after a while, Wilbur begins to wonder what Phil is even doing. He had assumed before that Phil was just putting out stuff to collect rainwater. Now he's doing... something.

He sits up from the bed, turning his attention to the hallway, listening to Phil's footsteps pass once again.

"Phil?" Wilbur calls, and he hears the steps pause. They start again, coming close, and soon enough, Phil is peeking out through the doorway, eyes wide.

"Yeah, mate?"

"What are you doing?"

Phil blinks, and his face shifts into something nearly mischievous. “Nothing.”

Wilbur just gives him a look. “Phil.”

“Give me a few minutes, I’ve almost got enough.” Phil huffs, waving a hand, and Wilbur only feels confused at that, watching Phil walk away.

“Enough? Enough for what?” Wilbur asks, hearing Phil walk away. “Phil!”

He could get up and go see for himself, but Wilbur finds that he doesn’t really want to get up at all. Instead, he falls back down onto his back, staring up at the ceiling with a sigh, and he closes his eyes, satisfied enough with the fact that he’ll eventually find out what Phil is doing.

He doesn’t mean to fall asleep, but when he wakes up, the room has gotten a little darker, and Phil is leaning over him with a cheeky grin.

“Wilbur.” Phil says, Wilbur blinking his eyes open with a frown. “Come on, come wash your hair a bit.”

“Huh?” Wilbur blinks again, feeling twice as exhausted as he did before. He still rises up where he’s laying down, though, and he lets Phil help him up on his feet.

“I collected some of the rain outside and put it into the bathtub.” Phil explains. “It’s not much, but it should be enough to at least get the blood out of your hair.” Phil knows he’s scrubbed Wilbur’s face clean of all the dirt and blood that had stained it, but he still wants to wash it all over again.

Phil’s seen disgusting things in his life. Rotting, burnt up corpses, guts and gore scattered in trash, but it’s not quite as terrible as the sight of Wilbur’s face being stained with zombie blood. You get used to the dirtiness of the apocalypse after a while, but it’s different when it touches someone you care for.

The threat of Wilbur's life being on the line was a scare enough, down in that sewer, but Phil doesn't think he'll ever forget the look of horror on Wilbur's face, his scream echoing out as Phil had shot that zombie dead right above him. It was killed, sure, it was thrown away, but that sight still stays, and Phil wants more than anything for Wilbur to not look like a survivor, dirtied and stained and scared.

He wants Wilbur to look alive.

Wilbur stumbles and lets Phil lead him through the dark apartment, his throat feeling a little tight with the shadows curled up around the two of them. With Phil at his side though, it's manageable, and he heads towards the bathroom, finding a few candles sitting on the sink.

"Found those in the kitchen." Phil nods his head at the light, smiling at Wilbur. "Nice, huh?"

"You've been productive." Wilbur observes out loud. What has *he* done? Cry and sleep. Phil has gone and done everything for them. He feels like the balance is a little skewed in terms of survival.

"I've had a lot of practice with settling in weird spots, mate." Phil shrugs, standing to the side to let Wilbur step past him. "This sort of stuff is second nature to me, by now." Scavenging out for supplies, food, water, it's just a constant skill that he always needs to practice. Phil's never stayed in one spot for too long to get comfortable with not needing to search for supplies.

Wilbur hums and rubs at his eyes, and he sits by the bathtub and sees a puddle of water sitting inside. There's a kitchen pot put to the side, a makeshift bucket that Phil must've been using. Wilbur almost feels guilty, for a moment, with Phil doing this for him. But it's washed out with a strange type of fondness that's leaving him kinda speechless. The guilt feels so tiny compared to the quiet warmth in his chest.

Phil makes Wilbur lean his head over the tub, and Wilbur lets Phil pour water over his head, soaking his hair and trying to wash out the layers of dirt and dried blood that's stuck to it. Wilbur closes his eyes and feels cold water wash over his scalp, Phil trying his best at getting

out at least a few of the tangles. The sound of the water falling is the only noise between the both of them, and Wilbur feels like the moment is fragile, almost fake with how kind it is.

“I wanted to ask,” Wilbur says, breaking the silence with a hoarse voice. He clears his throat before speaking again. “With the- the zombie bite...”

Phil hums as he tugs at a particularly stubborn tangle. “What about it?”

“How many times have you gotten bit?”

Phil laughs, something quiet and content. “Counting the new one? Three times. I’ve got the one on my arm that I’ve already shown you, and one on my ankle.” There had been that one instance with a zombie reaching out underneath a car, Phil being too slow to dodge in time. Thankfully, he hadn’t been traveling with anyone at the time. Was still painful and annoying as shit, though.

“Three times.” Wilbur mouths out, jolting when water is poured onto his head once more. Three bite marks, three death sentences, and yet Phil’s lived right through them. It feels impossible to even consider something like that. A quiet part of Wilbur tells him that there’s still a chance Phil can turn, can still die by sunrise a day later. “How’s your hand?” Wil asks, raising his head and feeling water drip down his neck.

Phil lifts out his palm in front of Wilbur, the bite mark still fresh and barely visible in the candlelight.

“It’ll heal.” Phil tells him, not seeming worried, but rather resigned. “Although I think I’m going to have to figure out gloves or something now, to hide this.”

Wil gives him a questioning look, and Phil nudges him to lean back over the tub, scrubbing out a specific spot. “It’s not good to have zombie bites out in the open for people to see.” He explains, Wilbur’s mind turning his words over. “They tend to panic. The whole immunity, and being bit- it just causes problems. Better to keep it covered, really.”

“Problems?”

“I could be considered a threat.” Phil shrugs. “A, uh, liability. I don’t blame them, I mean, if they got a town full of families, and it’s safe, they wouldn’t want the risk of a possibly infected person bringing the infection in. I am infected, really, I just- I haven’t lost all my humanity, I suppose.”

“You haven’t lost any, I think.” Wilbur counters.

“Well, there’s some effects.” Phil runs his fingers through Wilbur’s hair, satisfied with how it’s at least a little less tangled, now. “I don’t think I can be counted as entirely human anymore.”

Wilbur pauses. “What?”

“It’s like- ever since I got bit, I’ve been a bit more durable.” He admits, hands hovering over Wilbur’s head. “I don’t sleep that often anymore. I eat a bit more than I used to, I think, but it’s manageable.” He sighs. “It’s just strange.”

“Have you ever craved human flesh?” Wilbur asks, an honest and abrupt question. “Wanted to eat a couple annoying people?”

Phil just snorts. “No.”

“You’re a terrible zombie, Phil.”

“I’m not a zombie!” Phil scoffs, and he scoops up water and pours it over Wilbur’s head, just to be petty. “I’m just me.”

Wilbur laughs, leaning back and feeling water drip down onto his shoulders. “Yeah. You’re you.” He agrees, and he says it as if that is the best thing to be. As far as Wilbur is concerned,

it has to be.

Phil grabs a towel from the side and throws it over Wilbur's head, ignoring his yell of protest. With the cloth over Wilbur's face, he can't see the fond, exasperated look in Phil's expression, but he'll have an idea of it within the next few days.

Tommy's coaxed Technoblade to make a fort. A blanket fort, to be specific.

Apparently, you can't read stories without a blanket fort. It ruins the vibes if you do not have one.

Techno won't argue. Clearly, this seven year old is much wiser than he could ever be. Who is he to question his ways?

The fort takes up most of the living room, made from the blankets from their bed and from the chairs from the kitchen. It hangs off the couch and the wooden chairs, and Tommy shoves a bunch of pillows on the inside, curling up there as soon as Techno has the roof secured. Floof has gone inside with the kid, and he must be having the best nap of his life, with Tommy constantly giving him pats on the stomach whenever he wishes.

"Now this is what you do on rainy days." Tommy says, as Techno adjusts a chair to the side, making sure that the whole thing won't be collapsing anytime soon.

"Yeah?" Technoblade answers. "Did you and Wilbur used to do this?"

"Sometimes. But it always took forever to clean up, so we didn't do it a lot. I like it, though." Tommy gives a hum. "This is my big, awesome base. I've got a dog, I've got Henry. I need snacks."

Technoblade rolls his eyes. “Snacks.” He repeats.

“I want snacks.” Tommy pokes his head out from the blankets. “Technoblade.” He says, as if that is enough for Techno to do his bidding.

Technoblade goes into the kitchen and comes back with a can of carrots.

“Ew!” Tommy throws himself back into the fort, trying to simply escape just the sight of the vegetable. “Nevermind, nevermind! You can’t make me eat those!”

“You said you wanted snacks.” Techno grins, kneeling down by the entrance of the fort, seeing Tommy laying down beside Floof.

“Not anymore!” Tommy yells, and Technoblade laughs.

Eventually, he’ll join Tommy in the fort as well, with a book in hand and a lantern beside him. Tommy will fall asleep to the sound of a story of a hero, and Technoblade will look at his sleeping face, his pink stripe of hair, and he will tell himself that no matter what, he’s got to keep this.

Maybe Wilbur can end up just living here, as well.

Chapter End Notes

just a filler fluff chapter for today! Believe me, the action will pick back up in the next chap! Reunion is on the horizon!!!

anyhow, thanks for readin, overlook any typos, I'm sleepy and it's midnight, haha

till next chap

insert good chapter name here (IT IS ONE AM I AM TIRED)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

There are fifteen more days until Tommy's eighth birthday.

Tommy has been with Technoblade for about three weeks.

Wilbur has been gone for at least twice that.

Tommy likes to think he's pretty good at keeping track of the time. Wil's told him it's a handy thing to keep in mind, especially since they don't have clocks anymore.

With the boredom of the apocalypse and the general lack of things to do other than just survive, Tommy's fallen into the habit of keeping his numbers and days in order. He keeps track of the sunrises and the sunsets and the nights and the moon, and he writes it down when he can.

In the dirt or the cement or a piece of paper, on rare occasions, he'll write down the numbers, write what he knows, scribble it down and keep the memory. Wilbur's taken care to make sure he knows his numbers, and Tommy tries to keep those lessons close. He uses those lessons to the fullest extent, uses his memory as much as he can, and then he would tell Wilbur what he knows, what he's kept. And it wasn't much, really, but to Wilbur it seemed important, seemed good, so Tommy kept on telling him how many more days till his birthday, how many more days until he was eight years old.

Then the horde came.

And then Wilbur wasn't there at all. Dream and the others weren't nearly as good listeners as Wil, and it's not like Tommy wanted to talk to them anyway. A minute into any conversation,

and both sides would be stubborn and fighting on what happened in that horde, on that day.

Tommy *knows* Wilbur is alive, he has to be alive. Dream is a liar, and so are the others. They can all go choke on a granola bar, for all Tommy cares.

There are fifteen more days until Tommy's eighth birthday. He tells Techno this, in the early morning when they're still half asleep and getting ready in the bathroom. Tommy's mouth is full of toothpaste and he's scrubbing away at his teeth as he mutters out the words.

"I'm going to be eight in fifteen days." He says, a little muffled around the toothbrush in this mouth.

"Really?" Techno asks, mid-way through pulling his hair back into a ponytail. He raises his eyebrows with something surprised, and his face shifts into a near frown, like he's not sure what to do with the information he's been given. Techno had forgotten just how young Tommy really is. The reminder that he's only seven is a strange one, to say the least.

God, he's too tiny.

"You want a birthday present?" Techno asks, tilting his head down towards Tommy, hands still held up behind him where he's adjusting the rubber band around his hair. "Or some sort of party?"

"How would you make a party with two people?" Tommy asks, holding his toothbrush in midair, spitting out into the sink. "Three, if you count Floof."

"Maybe Wilbur will be here by then." Techno shrugs, not too hopeful but also not too pessimistic.

"He better be." Tommy frowns at his reflection in the mirror, a stony face, and then his expression turns into something silly as he goes to adjust his hair carefully, before settling back into a deep frown.

Techno snorts. “What do you want for your birthday?”

“Wil.” Tommy answers, nearly instantly. Techno sighs out a big puff of air. “I want Wilby here.”

“Well, I can’t really make that one happen.” Technoblade admits honestly. “Other than that?”

Tommy hums, sticking his toothbrush into a cup of water, trying to think. What could he have, with Technoblade? What can he get that he couldn’t have before, or could hardly get at all? A treat, a rarity, something cool.

“A gun.”

Technoblade freezes in where he’s adjusting his ponytail, blinking slowly at his reflection. “What.”

“A gun.” Tommy repeats, making a pointing gesture and aiming at Technoblade. He makes a ‘pew’ noise up at him. “A shotgun!”

“I hardly think you can even handle a shotgun.”

“Yes I can!” Tommy insists, shooting at Techno again with his pointer finger. “I’ve fired guns before! I’ve even killed a zombie with one once!”

Granted, that was a desperate night, and Tommy had missed his shot like twice before actually hitting a zombie in the head with a bullet, but he had killed it either way. Wilbur had praised him on the good aim, and Tommy had been sure he could defeat anything with the firearm in hand.

Then said firearm ran out of ammo. Then he and Wilbur had just taken off running, and shooting was less of a need after that, because hiding is easier than killing.

“That’s good.” Technoblade hums, satisfied with the idea of Tommy knowing how to defend himself. Although it still leaves a bitter taste on his tongue with him needing to do that at all.

If there were still any zombies left standing in this part of the city, Techno would have murdered them all by last night, just to make sure Tommy wouldn’t have to go to such extents ever again.

“Yeah, Wilbur said I was a good shot.” Tommy grins, resting his palms against the counter. “I’m the best shot ever, actually. In the world. So I should get a gun.”

“I don’t think you’ll really need it, though.” Technoblade points out.

“Yes I do!”

“No, actually-”

“I do, I do!” Tommy nods his head. “I need a big one. And a loud one. So it can kill all the zombies.”

“All the zombies in here are already dead.” Technoblade states, and Tommy opens his mouth to say otherwise, then realizes that Techno is right, on that part.

“Oh.” Tommy falters. “Well, I still want one.”

Technoblade gives a small fond scoff, turning around and walking out of the bathroom, making his way towards the hallway.

“You have so many, anyway!” Tommy yells, running right after him. They go out into the living room, and Tommy raises his arms up to the walls, pointing intensely at the guns just sitting there, a strange type of apocalyptic decor. Techno thinks it’s practical.

Tommy’s gotten used to the sight of them over the time he’s been here, to the point that he actually forgot they were there at all, but now that his mind is set on them, he’s look at every single one with a new light.

“Can’t I just have one? That one! This one.” Tommy climbs onto the couch, pointing up at the wall, poking his finger at one of them. Technoblade reaches over and smacks his hand away. “Come on!”

“Don’t poke those.” Techno says. “And no, you can’t-”

“Pleaseeee-”

“-go using them, I don’t even think you can hold that one properly-”

“-please, please, pretty pleaseeee-”

“-and you-” Technoblade grunts as Tommy grabs at his sleeve with a whine of despair, as if Techno is literally killing him with not letting him have a gun. He looks up at Techno with his best puppy eyes he can manage, pouting his lip and trying to summon tears so he can really guilt trip the hell out of him.

“I’ll be careful with it! Wil’s told me how to be careful, and I won’t even play with it, I’ll be so careful, the most careful ever-” Tommy insists, Technoblade tugging at his arm with no results. “Just for my birthday! We can go shoot cans, or something, since you killed all the zombies already.”

Technoblade stares at Tommy with narrowed eyes.

“ *Please* .” Tommy repeats, nearly sobbing with it. He’s going to practically flop onto the ground face-first at this point, with how much he’s hanging off of Techno’s arm.

Technoblade’s face wavers a bit, and he gives a short sigh, Tommy’s face immediately lighting up in hope.

“Only for your birthday-”

“FUCK YES!” Tommy jumps off the couch, hopping around in a fit of celebration. Floof runs around in circles by his feet, excited with him. “Yes, yes!”

“-but you’re going to have to listen to me for the whole time.”

“Yeah- I’ll be so careful and listen-y, uh-huh.” Tommy nods, smiling wide. He claps his hands together. “I’m going to be so good at shooting stuff. We should practice now!”

Technoblade gives a smile, crossing his arms. “No.”

“Tomorrow?”

“On your birthday.”

Tommy gives an exasperated huff. “Fine.”

Technoblade shakes his head, seeming content. “Go put your shoes on for patrol. I’m going to go get my mask.”

Tommy's excitement fizzles out into nothing, and he makes an upset face. "Nooo."

"Go." Techno insists, heading back into their bedroom. "Do you need me to help with your shoelaces?" He calls out, Tommy stomping over to the front door where his shoes are sitting.

"No!" Tommy calls back. "Can't we skip patrol today?"

"Nope." Technoblade comes into the kitchen pulling his gas mask over his face, covering his features. "We need to go check on the roads and make sure the walls haven't been messed with or anything." They already missed one day with the lazy day. Techno won't push it, even with Tommy's annoyingly effective puppy eyes.

Tommy frowns, fiddling with his shoelaces. "Do we-"

"-really have to?" Wilbur makes a face, staring down at the map in his hands. "It'll take days to get through the horde."

Phil hums from behind Wilbur, hands working on a tiny braid in his curls. Wilbur's beanie sits on the bed beside him, and their bags are on the ground at Wilbur's feet. They're packed up and about as ready as they can be, and Wilbur's heart feels heavy with the thought of what's waiting up ahead.

The rain has lightened up, after raining for all throughout the night, and now the air holds a fresh smell, clean of any hints of rotten flesh. Since they're up here and away from the zombies down on the street, it's almost easy to try and convince yourself that it really is safe here. Calm, quiet.

It's a temporary thing. Wilbur knows.

And he won't lie, it scares him. It bothers him more than it should, and he likes to say he's used to the stress of surviving, but there's no denying that it can wear you down after a while.

Phil's company helps.

Wilbur's never had someone to braid his hair before.

"The sewers aren't an option." Phil says, Wilbur scrunching his nose a bit at that.

"They could be." Wilbur protests, but it's a bit weak. Can you blame him? He'd rather do anything than ever go into those dark tunnels again, but with the chance of Tommy being at the end of it, he'll still consider it. "If we prepare a bit better-"

"No." Phil stresses, and he tugs at Wilbur's hair just a bit to fix the tiny braid he's woven in. "That's final." Wilbur doesn't bother arguing any more against it. He'll settle with that.

He still sighs. "It'll take us forever to get through." From what the map says, the base at where Tommy's at should only be a day's travel. Except, with the hundreds of zombies in the way, Wilbur thinks it'll take much longer than that.

"But we'll get through." Phil reassures, seeming satisfied with his work and reaching for Wilbur's hat. He tugs it over Wil's head, giving a quiet laugh when Wilbur whacks at his hands to adjust it properly. "As long as you don't fucking die, then we'll be fine."

"And you." Wilbur counters. He turns in where he's sitting, holding the map to his chest. "You better not fucking die either. I don't know what I'd do."

"It takes a lot to kill me, mate." Phil deadpans. "At this point, the horde is just more annoying than deadly to me. To you, though..." Phil frowns, something worried in his eyes.

“I’ll be fine.” Wilbur insists, pushing at Phil to make him lose that strange sort of expression. It’s too much, and Wil doesn’t know what to do with all the emotion he has piling up in his chest. For once, it’s not a bad type of emotion. Just a certain fondness that usually comes with caring for Tommy. Now it’s Phil.

“I’ll stay close, I’ll be behind you, all of that.” Wilbur stands up, grabbing his backpack from the ground and swinging it over his shoulder. He fiddles with the zipper of his jacket, and zips it up to keep the slight chill out. “Since you’re a zombie expert, apparently.”

“I’m not.” Phil laughs. “Only part zombie, really.” He stands up too, taking his backpack and Wil’s axe from the ground as Wilbur folds up the map in his hands, tucking it away in his pocket.

“I’ll never be used to that.” Wilbur mutters under his breath.

“Sometimes I’m not used to it.” Phil admits. He nudges at Wil’s arm. “But it’s useful, huh?”

Wilbur makes a face. “To prevent you from turning, yeah. I’m still not happy about using you as a human shield, though.” He walks out of the room, adjusting the bag on his shoulders as he goes out into the hall. “Or, zombie shield. Human-zombie shield. What even are you?”

“You’re not using me as a shield, mate.” Phil says, following right after Wil as they walk through the apartment. “I’m *protecting* you. There’s a difference.”

“You’re using your immunity as a barrier between my skin and a zombie’s teeth.” Wilbur responds, ignoring the weird swoop his heart gives at how earnest Phil sounds. “You’re a meat shield.”

“Only with that attitude.” Phil scoffs, Wilbur giving a small smile. They head up to the front door, Wilbur stepping to the side to let Phil open it first, to look out into the hall. Phil grabs onto the doorknob, but he doesn’t yet open it. Instead, he gives a look at Wilbur, face serious. “You stay behind me, okay?”

“I know.”

“Don’t go ahead.”

“I know, Phil.” Wilbur nods. “We already talked about this.” They had, in great length over their pathetic breakfast. Wilbur hadn’t enjoyed it. He was in quiet suffering as Phil kept laying rule after rule on how he was going to take the brunt of the danger while Wilbur stayed safe.

Frankly, Wilbur thinks it’s all bullshit. He can handle himself just fine. But Phil is far too insistent upon this, and with his immunity, it’d be stupid for Wilbur to try and protest otherwise. As if he has a better shot against the horde compared to someone who literally can’t *turn*.

“I mean it.” Phil says once more, and Wilbur sighs.

“Just open the door!”

Phil raises his eyebrows, but his lips turn up into a smile, a tell that he was just fucking with Wil to get on his nerves. Wilbur hates this man. He would die for him in a heartbeat.

“Okay, okay. Let’s-”

-go already!” Tommy yells, slightly annoyed at how *slow* Techno seems to walk. He’s already at the other end of the street, Floof beside his legs, but Technoblade just seems to stay at the same, slow walking pace. Tommy is half-tempted to just sprint off into the distance, just to get him to speed up a little. “Aren’t we practically done?”

“We’ve barely been walking for like, half an hour.” Technoblade answers back, looking up at the buildings like he’s searching for something.

“And it’s been a boring half hour.” Tommy mutters, Floof brushing up against his ankles. Tommy gives a scratch behind the ears, smiling at the dog. “Can we go home?!”

“Nope.” Technoblade says, finally catching up to Tommy and walking right past him, still heading further down the street, in a direction that is not back to the apartment. Tommy groans.

Sometimes, patrol is okay. Sometimes, Tommy likes to run around through the streets, Floof on his heels, Technoblade far behind keeping watch. Sometimes it’s fun to have the empty streets all to himself, Tommy being free to yell and scream and sing all he wants, with Techno listening and adding his two cents whenever needed.

Although, other times, patrol is just downright tedious, and Techno has to literally drag Tommy out of bed to get him to follow along. Sometimes Tommy doesn’t like walking, okay? And Technoblade will only carry Tommy for so long, even with his best puppy eyes.

“Haven’t we looked around enough? The walls were still fine.” Tommy calls, running up after Techno as they turn the corner. The walls had been untouched and steady, the zombie walls still being dead and gross as always. Nothing different there, except for a few puddles left behind from the rain. “And there’s no zombies in here!”

“Yeah, you’re right.” Techno nods, and Tommy lifts his head with hope, wondering if that means they’ll finally turn around. “But we still have more walking to do.”

“Hmmm.” Tommy leans his weight into Techno as he walks, and Techno holds an arm over his shoulders, giving an amused huff. “No.”

“Yeah.”

“*No* .” Tommy grabs at Techno’s hand, stumbling along. “Floof doesn’t want to walk anymore. Right, Floof?”

The dog in question raises his head with his tongue sticking out of his mouth. He looks like a fool. Tommy loves that dog.

“Yeah, Floof says he doesn’t want to walk.”

“You speak dog now?” Technoblade drawls, searching through the street for something specific. It should be around here...

“I am fluent in dog. The best dog whisperer.” Tommy nods. He abruptly stops walking, stomping his feet down into the ground. “I don’t want to walk anymore.”

“I’m not carrying you.”

“Yes you are.” Tommy raises his arms up, Technoblade looking at him as he pauses in place. “Please.” He adds, like that makes it all so much more agreeable.

Technoblade levels him with an unimpressed look behind his mask, but then he seems like he’s considering it, and he shrugs, walking back towards Tommy. “I’m going to end up putting you back down right now, anyway.”

“No you won’t. I’m tired.” Tommy protests, wrapping his arms around Techno’s neck as he’s lifted off the ground, relieved from the burden of using his legs to get around.

“You can take a nap when we get home.” Technoblade tells him. “But first,” He no longer heads off down the road, and instead makes a detour to the side, to one of the broken down buildings left behind by the apocalypse. Tommy stares with curiosity, and finds them standing in front of what looks like a small shop, the front windows being shattered and the inside being a little dim.

It's a guitar store. An instrument store, really, tucked away in the streets of this city, but all Tommy is focusing on are the dusty guitars he sees hanging up on the walls.

"Floof, stay out here. I don't want you walking on any glass." Technoblade orders, and Floof sits where he is, staying on the sidewalk and watching as Technoblade heads on inside, pushing the door open. The bell above still gives a ring, and Tommy looks up at it with wide eyes.

It's familiar, in a way. It brings back an old memory, a shop similar to this one, Wilbur holding his hand as they walked inside. At that time, everything was still normal, okay. There were no zombies.

Tommy remembers how they had gone to repair Wilbur's guitar, how they had scraped up the money for it, how Wilbur had played a song for him as soon as they got home. Wilbur had smiled the whole time, and Tommy listened with all the attention he could give, the two of them curled up on the ground, quiet music playing out into the air.

Tommy's arms curl just a little tighter around Techno's neck. Technoblade doesn't mention it, and instead just walks around through the mess of broken glass and scattered papers. There's a blood stain off in the corner.

"What is...?" Tommy murmurs out, blinking up at the wall of guitars, Technoblade humming.

"You said Wil used to play guitar." Technoblade shrugs. "I thought we could grab one for the apartment." He walks up to the wall, looking over the options and eyeing a few guitars that have fallen and crashed to the ground, now broken and dirty. Those won't be any good.

"I don't know how to play it." Tommy admits, and his voice feels too small. That's Wilbur's thing. That's his talent, his guitar.

"Me neither." Technoblade responds, just as quiet. "You pick one. Any of them."

Tommy stares up at all the different colors and sizes offered, and he turns his head, Techno slowly walking past the wall to see all the guitars. It's a little hard to see them in the dark, but Tommy still knows which is which. He reaches his arm out to a bright red one, simply just curious.

"This one?"

"No." Tommy shakes his head. He pokes at the guitar, and his fingers come away dusty. "That's one's not...hm." He looks around. "This one." He points, and Technoblade walks up to a more simple guitar on the wall.

This one looks more like the guitar from before. Light brown, simple and a little cheap. It's Wilbur's.

Or at least, it looks like Wilbur's. Before he had sent it flying into a zombie's skull.

Techno goes to set Tommy down on the counter nearby, brushing off dust before putting him down. Tommy swings his legs and watches as Techno grabs the guitar off the wall, careful to not break it or damage it in any way. Techno's never played a guitar in his life, he doesn't know how fragile these things could be.

He carries the instrument over to Tommy, setting it down on the counter beside him, Tommy holding his hands out over the strings. He strums at it, and it's terribly out of tune, but it's real, it's music.

It's familiar.

"Maybe we could give it to Wilbur when he gets here, since neither of us know how to play it." Techno suggests, watching Tommy lean over the strings and mess with them, the noise echoing out into the air. "Or we could try learning."

Tommy nods, plucking at the strings, and there's a teardrop that lands right on the guitar.

Technoblade goes still, and he leans forward with a hand on the guitar and a hand on Tommy's shoulder, voice low. "Hey."

"It's not tuned." Tommy says, his voice shaky as he gives a sniff. Technoblade holds his shoulder a little tighter. "It's not- It sounds all funny."

Technoblade doesn't say much in response, he only leans down lower to look Tommy in the eyes, and Tommy stares back past his mask with a barely held together face.

"Can't you play a song?"

"I don't know how." Technoblade says, and it sounds like an apology.

"But-" Tommy sobs, Technoblade holding his hands to his face, putting aside the guitar completely. "But Wil-"

"Hey, hey." Technoblade speaks softly, Tommy grabbing onto his wrists with a cry. "I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I thought this would make you happy."

"I am happy." Tommy cries. He's overjoyed with the guitar. It gives a chance for him to have something from before, but there's still a missing piece of the puzzle, and he can't help but be emotional over that. "I just want Wilbur."

"I know." Technoblade nods, and Tommy snuffles, his chest giving another sob. "I know, kid."

"You'll give him the guitar when he gets here, right?" Tommy asks. "You should- He can teach you how to play."

Technoblade makes a face behind the mask. “I don’t think I’ll be all that good at it.”

“Practice makes perfect.” Tommy tells him, wiping at his face. “You’re going to need lots of practice.”

Techno huffs. “Yeah, I think so.” He picks up the guitar from the counter. “Come on, let’s go.” Tommy reaches out towards him and Technoblade picks him back up, heading towards where they came in, one hand with a newly gained guitar, and the other holding Tommy close.

Tommy stares at the instrument in Techno’s hand, wondering of the possibilities it could bring, wondering if he can get Wilbur to sing to him when he comes back.

Who is he kidding? Of course he’ll sing to him. Wilbur is Wilbur. Maybe he’ll even sing to Techno. He can sing for all of them. Just for them, just a song in the apocalypse, away from the zombies. It’ll be perfect.

Floof is waiting for them outside, laying down on the road as they go out the door, and Tommy smiles at the sight of the dog.

“Floof!” Tommy calls, ready to have one hell of a one sided conversation with a dog. “Come look-”

“-at this.” Wilbur breathes out, eyes wide. The sun is beginning to set, and that’s easy to see from where they’re standing on the roof. They hardly made much progress over the day, only getting through three buildings that had been infested with a fair amount of zombies.

Phil’s clothes are a little more bloodstained, now. Wilbur needs to clean his axe pretty soon.

“What, mate?” Phil asks, walking over to Wilbur’s side, looking over the ledge with him.

Over the edge of the roof, Wilbur has a perfect view of the horde, a perfect view of just how massive it is. He can see out into the streets and see the crowds of undead zombies stumbling around, and it’s a little unsettling. It’s a little terrifying.

Phil gives a low whistle. “That’s a shit-ton of zombies.”

“They’re moving.” Wilbur says, but his own voice feels a little far away as he pulls his map out from his pocket, unfolding it out to check the direction of where they need to be heading. “They’re going the same direction as us.” Wilbur says.

“What?” Phil turns his head to him, nearly baffled. “No.”

“They’re fucking- migrating, or whatever, it’s going to hit the base.” Wilbur says, dragging a finger across the locations on the map. “It’s going to trap them.”

“Surely they’ll be sturdy?” Phil asks. With a guy having the nickname of ‘the Blood God’, Phil would like to assume that just one passing horde isn’t going to be his downfall. “They’ll hold. It’ll just- pass by them.”

“Hopefully. But then we’ll be trapped out here.” Wilbur frowns. He looks up from the map, staring down at the horde once more. The sunset glows red over everything. “We need to keep moving.”

“Hey.” Phil pulls at his arm. “We should rest for the night.”

“We’ll rest when the moon is up.”

Phil only tilts his head with a look. “Wilbur.”

Wilbur only gives a steady glare.

“We’ll head out first thing in the morning. Yes, we need to be quick, but you should still-”

“-sleep already.” Technoblade says, Tommy whacking him in the back with Henry.

“I’m not tired!” Tommy insists, stubborn still, and Techno is half tempted to just throw a blanket over him and pin him down until the kid just eventually passes out. Unfortunately, he’s not anywhere near prepared enough for the screaming that would bring, so no on that option. “What are you writing?”

“About today.” Technoblade answers, the journal held carefully in his hand, the pen not writing anything as Tommy leans into his side to look at the pages. “About patrol.”

“Nothing *happened* during patrol.” Tommy groans. “But! We got a guitar.”

“Exactly. During patrol.”

“No.” Tommy shakes his head. “After patrol. Because the guitar shop isn’t boring.” Tommy waves his plush cow around in the air like he’s making some grand point, and Technoblade looks up from his writing with an exasperated expression.

“Patrol isn’t boring either.”

“Yes it is.” Tommy lays back on the bed, kicking his feet into Techno’s leg. “It’s dumb and boring. And I’m right and you’re wrong.”

“That doesn’t seem fair.” Technoblade says lightly, holding back a laugh.

“Aren’t you supposed to be writing?” Tommy asks, turning his head to Techno with a pinched face.

“I was.” Techno deadpans. “Then someone kept distractin’ me.”

Tommy scoffs, rolling over onto his stomach. “Keep writing, then! Write something, Technoblade- oh, I’ll tell you what to write. Okay, so we got a guitar for Wilbur, and it was really dusty and gross.”

“Riveting.” Technoblade responds, although he does write down something on the pages.

Tommy gives him a little look, Henry held close in his arms. Technoblade glances up at him, glances at that part of pink hair Tommy has at the front of his forehead, and he offers a small smile.

Tommy only narrows his eyes further. “You’re so-”

“-stupid, Phil.” Wilbur insults, swearing under his breath as he presses his arm against Phil’s arm, trying to stop it from bleeding any more. They’ve made good distance now, and they’re getting closer to where Tommy oughta be, but now they’re in a bit of a sticky situation, being lost in the halls of some building, with Phil bleeding out of his arm from a participle bad bite wound.

“Just a scratch.” Phil jokes, voice a little strained. “Ow- fuck, watch it!”

“You are an *idiot*. ” Wilbur hisses, but he does hold Phil’s arm a little gentler, and carefully wraps it as best he can for what little time he has.

“It was going for you!” Phil protests.

“I could’ve fought it off!”

“Like hell you could, that thing was vicious-” Phil shakes his head, staring down the hall where the same zombie that caused this is now laying dead on the ground, its head smashed in. Wilbur has blood on his shirt, now. Phil’s just been getting worse over the days, but at least he’s in high spirits. “Fuck, that hurts.”

“Okay, this’ll do.” Wilbur sighs, satisfied enough with the makeshift bandages, Phil lifting his arm with a slight grimace. He gives a grin to Wilbur.

“I’ve gone through worse.”

“That zombie took a literal chunk out of your arm, how can- actually no, nevermind, some other time.” Wilbur waves a hand, helping Phil onto his feet. They both go still at the sound of an undead shriek echoing down the hall, and Phil takes Wilbur by the hand and pulls him in the opposite direction. He grabs the axe still in the zombies head on the ground, and yanks it out, the two of them quickly heading down the hall.

“Okay, come on, we should move over-”

“-here.” Techno calls out to the living room, Tommy completely ignoring him and instead just picking up another crayon. “You’re going to spill your bowl over there.”

“No I won’t!” Tommy yells back, confident in his eating abilities. Usually, he eats dinner at the kitchen table, with Techno, but he already had all his crayons and drawing paper over here, in the living room, so the food shall move with him.

Tommy hums happily as he adds a bit of pink to his drawing, and he puts the crayon down to pick up his spoon, eating a mouthful of his soup. He drops a bit onto the carpet, and furiously scrubs at it with his hand to make it go away. It’s hardly noticeable.

Tommy throws a drawing over it.

“Tommy.” Techno calls again, and Tommy makes a little noise in response.

“I’m drawing!”

“If I knew you’d enjoy those so much I would’ve given them to you ages ago.” Technoblade mutters, walking out of the kitchen to join Tommy in the living room. “Hey, get up and-”

“-run!” Wilbur yells, screaming a bit as a rotting hand reaches out at him. Phil yanks him forward with a burning look in his eyes and he slams the axe in his hand into the zombie’s neck. It goes slamming down into the ground, and Phil yanks the axe out and heads on his way.

“Come on, this way!” Phil calls, the two of them running up the stairs, Wilbur staying beside Phil and just staying pressed to the wall when Phil sends another zombie flying down the steps.

There’s a door at the end of the stairs, and Wilbur makes a frantic grab at it, swinging it open and pulling Phil along with him.

“Hurry up, in here, in-!”

“-here.” Tommy crouches down lower next to the kitchen cabinet.

“What?” Technoblade asks, looking away from where he had been cutting vegetables, in the middle of making dinner.

“There’s something in here.” Tommy repeats, squinting past the cans of food, and reaching his hand into the dark. “It’s like- Oh!”

Technoblade raises his eyebrows, turning around to look at Tommy, and only feeling more confused when Tommy begins speaking in a voice that’s usually only reserved for Floof.

“Hello!” Tommy greets, into a cabinet of food cans. “Hello there!”

“What are you doing.” Technoblade tilts his head to the side in slight concern.

“There’s a spider!” Tommy explains, seeming just fascinated. “Hi! Oh, you’re big.”

Technoblade frowns. “Don’t touch it.”

“But-”

“Don’t touch the spider.” Technoblade repeats. He does not want to be dealing with a spider running around in his kitchen. “Actually, go get a shoe for me.”

“No!” Tommy yells, seeming horrified. “He’s just a little guy!”

Techno blinks. “It’s a spider.”

“He’s a little ole guy.” Tommy nods, like Techno just doesn’t know what he’s talking about. “Living it up in the cans. I bet he has such a good life in there.”

The way Tommy keeps talking to the spider, it makes Floof poke his head into the kitchen, seeking love and affection, and Technoblade just accepts the fact that he will have a spider in his cabinets. “Alright then. Don’t mess with him, he probably wouldn’t appreciate a random kid poking him.”

“I’m going to name you Shroud.” Tommy says, smiling wide. He watches as the spider scurries away onto a web he hadn’t noticed was there before, and he gasps upon seeing it. “Techno, Techno, look-!”

“-look.” Wilbur whispers out. Phil limps just barely up beside him, and they both stand out in the open, ahead of the horde, ahead of the danger.

With a wall of dead zombies up ahead.

Chapter End Notes

THANKS FOR READING *passes out*

(pls disregard any bad typos I am HALF ASLEEP)

***Pointing spiderman meme* HEY I KNOW THAT GUY**

“Holy shit.” Phil murmurs, leaning onto Wilbur’s shoulder with wide eyes. Wilbur reaches an arm out to help steady him, but it’s distracted, and he can’t rip his eyes away from the sight before him. “Are those- Those are all just bodies?”

“Zombie bodies.” Wilbur says, and even his voice feels far away, out of reach. The image of rotten corpses thrown together into a pile is disgusting on it’s own, but it also holds an air of intimidation, fear. It’s too much, even for the apocalypse. “This guy is fucking insane.”

“God, that’s-” Phil shakes his head, making a noise of disbelief.

He’s seen a lot of things in his travel, but with something like this, he can really understand why the guy inside is regarded with so much fear, now. This is just stupidly impressive for someone to do on their own. Phil’s been desperate before, but not to that extent. “That’s not even possible, how long would that take? Who would-? What the fuck?”

Wilbur makes an agreeing hum in the back of his throat.

There’s Tommy. There’s Tommy, so close and yet so far, just on the other side of that wall, trapped with the same madman who *made* it. Part of him is tempted to keep going, push on and barge inside, but that could do more harm than good.

They’ve been forcing their way through the city for the past few days already. Now this is a different matter. Now they’re going to need to be a little less...violent. Quiet. Wilbur makes a note on how his clothes have once again been stained with blood and guts. At least there’s no sewer water this time around.

He rips his eyes away to finally pull himself back to where he is, turning to Phil instead.

“Are you okay?” He glances down at Phil’s ankle, the end of his pants being soaked in blood. “I don’t know if we- we should-”

He frowns at seeing the strained smile on Phil’s face. The last crowd of zombies had been a bitch to get through, and while it had been fine for the most part, Phil had gotten grabbed at the last second, being forced to tear his leg away from the jaw of a stubborn zombie. Wilbur had slammed it into a wall and cracked its skull open, but it didn't stop the fact Phil was forced to slow down for a little while.

“I can walk.” Phil insists, trying to step back, Wilbur only grabbing his arm and forcing Phil to let him support him. Phil huffs, his arm curling around Wilbur’s shoulders. “It was just that one that got my fucking ankle-”

“I’ll wrap it right now.” Wilbur nods. He gives one more look to the walls of dead bodies, and turns away to the buildings around him instead. “Let’s- let’s hide somewhere nearby.”

“We’re not going to head in?” Phil asks, not resisting when Wilbur steers them to a nearby building that looks quiet and empty.

“At night.” Wilbur responds, and there’s a slight bit of determination woven into his words, the exhaustion from the last few days slipping away. “We’ll sneak in at night, get Tommy, and then we’ll leave before the horde hits. Then he can’t follow.” Not unless he’s got a death wish. Wilbur’s hoping that Phil’s immunity is a once-in-a-lifetime sort of thing, because it would be really annoying if this guy was actually capable of fighting through the horde to stay on their heels.

“You sure you don’t want to beat him up a little?” Phil grins, and it looks a little dangerous with the way he’s got blood staining his face. “Rob him? I’ll set his base on fire for you.”

Wilbur gives a laugh, shaking his head. He’s tempted. Oh, how he’s tempted. But that all depends on Tommy. If Tommy is alright, safe, then Wilbur will go. He will leave, and he will never come back.

But if there is a single *scratch* to be found on his little brother?

“I’ll keep that in mind.” Wilbur tells Phil, and Phil hums, swearing as he’s set down for Wilbur to finally look at his bleeding leg. “Are you going to be okay?”

“Yeah, yeah.” Phil nods, shrugging off his backpack and putting it to the side. “I think my arm is doing better.” He holds up said arm, peeling off the crudely made bandages that are tied on.

“In all honesty-” Wilbur gives a small worried laugh under his breath as he kneels down in front of Phil. “You look like shit.”

“Oh, wow, thanks.” Phil deadpans, rolling his eyes with a fond smile pointed at him. He turns his attention back to his arm. “Hm, I think it’s not that bad. I can’t tell past the dried blood, to be honest.”

“You are- You’re-” Wilbur stammers over his words, rolling up Phil’s pant leg and finding a jagged bite mark in his skin. He wipes at it to try and clean off some of the blood, and he can’t help it, everything in him is screaming in panic at the sheer sight of it. The image of a zombie bite means death, that’s it, but not with Phil. Not here.

It doesn’t make Wilbur feel any more calm.

“Fuck’s sake, you’re such an idiot.” Wilbur breathes out, searching through his backpack for any more cloth they could use to try and stop the bleeding. “A fucking *idiot*, a fool.”

“Would you stop insulting me, I’m bleeding out.” Phil laughs, only poking fun. “I’m alright.” He says, honest and true.

“I’m so glad you’re immune.” Wilbur responds, trying to calm his racing heart. “Fucking hell, this- we’re never doing this again.”

“Running right through a horde isn’t one of my best ideas.” Phil shrugs. “Although I’ve usually had good luck with them...”

“I don’t think luck matters.” Wilbur mutters, searching through Phil’s back for supplies. “It doesn’t matter, the next time we ever see a horde, we’re waiting it out. You’re going to make me just die on the spot from just *looking* at you.”

“Mate.” Phil says, like he isn’t sure what to make of that. He still gives Wilbur a small smile.

Wilbur glances up at him with narrowed eyes. “Rest. We’ll go in after sundown.”

“What are you drawing?”

Tommy hums, looking up with a red crayon held in his hand. “Huh?”

Technoblade lifts his eyes from where he’s sharpening his sword, sat down on the ground with his back leaning against the couch behind him. “What are you drawing?” He repeats, curious.

Tommy gives a little smile, slapping his hands over his papers, as if Techno is going to lean forward to try and get a peek. He drags them out of sight, turning his back to Techno. “You’ll see.” He says, a cheeky grin on his face.

Techno only raises his eyebrows in interest.

“It’s gonna be so cool.” Tommy mutters under his breath, reaching for another crayon. He sits hunched over his paper, tongue stuck out in concentration to make an absolute work of art.

“I’m sure it will be.” Technoblade huffs, the start of a smile on his lips. He goes back to sharpening his sword. Tommy hums a song into the air.

The day hasn’t been too eventful overall. Other than Tommy finding that spider in the cabinet during making dinner (he insists on calling it Shroud), it’s been a relatively calm time for the both of them. Patrol had been quick, maybe a little lazy, but could you really blame Techno? Tommy had been far more willing to play catch with Floof rather than go walk through the streets for like the hundredth time. Techno was willing to bend the schedule for him, as if he hasn’t done that plenty of times already.

The morning had started late, and Technoblade had woken up with a child laying directly on top of him, completely knocked out and snoring into his shirt. He had whacked Techno across the head with Henry upon being woken up, but Technoblade still regards the moment as something precious. Tommy is endearing when half-asleep, even in his grumpy moments.

Tommy’s been getting better with his shoelaces, although he’s also been getting lazier with them. He’ll do one shoe and decide that’s enough, heading out with the added risk of tripping onto the dirty concrete. Technoblade knows he should be strict with Tommy and make him actually tie his shoes himself, but for a kid who only really got the hang of it like a week before, he’ll let it slide. After all, sometimes it takes like a whole five minutes for Tommy to figure the shoelaces out. Sometimes Technoblade is impatient.

The food in the kitchen sits on the stove, still warm, and Technoblade wonders what they oughta eat for the morning tomorrow. There’s still leftovers. Usually he saves those for the next dinner, but he could just have them for breakfast too. As long as Tommy doesn’t feel picky tomorrow when they wake up, then Technoblade can have an easy morning.

It’s past sunset outside, the night chill starting to set in. Technoblade lifts his head to look at Floof, the dog sitting by the screendoor of their tiny little balcony. It’s almost like he’s keeping watch, staring out into the dim street.

“Where’s my pink?” Tommy asks, looking around. He lifts a few papers up, holding his main drawing to his chest so Technoblade won’t be able to see it. “I can’t find my pink.”

“Did you check the top of your head?” Technoblade asks, snorting at the way Tommy immediately slaps a hand onto his hair. Tommy turns around to look at him with a tiny glare.

“My pink *crayon*.” Tommy stresses, the paper against his chest wrinkling as he looks around a little more. Technoblade looks across the mess of papers and drawings, eyes falling down to the few things scattered by his foot. He finds a pink crayon beside his leg.

“It’s right here.” Technoblade says, picking it up and throwing it to Tommy. The kid snatches it off the ground within a second, and he turns back around, quickly using it on his drawing.

Techno smiles, leaning back against the couch with his sword in his lap, and he goes still at the sound of a growl resonating through the room.

Tommy freezes too, raising his head in confusion.

“Floof.” Technoblade says, turning and looking at Floof, who continues to growl, a near bark coming from the dog. “Floof.” Techno repeats, quickly getting onto his feet, Tommy watching him with wide eyes, his pink crayon still held in his hand.

“What is he growling at?” Tommy asks, and Technoblade gently shushes him, peeking out through the screen door where Floof had been sitting. Technoblade takes one look outside, then flinches back, quickly jumping to his feet. “Techno?” Tommy asks.

“Stay away from the window, I’m getting my mask!” Techno calls back, Floof continuing his growling. Tommy watches him stalk off into the hall with a slightly frantic energy, frowning.

He gets up onto his feet, walking over to the screen door to see what is in the street. Either it’s a zombie, or it’s a bad guy, because Techno’s told him before, Floof only growls at-

Tommy drops his crayon onto the ground with a gasp. Floof looks up at him with interest, then watches as Tommy runs the other direction, making a beeline to the front door, leaving behind his papers on the living room floor.

On the ground, there's a half made drawing of Technoblade, with a bright red cape and a gold crown on his head. Tommy hardly pays attention to it at all, and leaves through the front door without even putting on his shoes.

Techno comes out from the hallway to look out the screen door again, to really see who's out on the street, if their faces mean anything. He had only seen figures out on the road before his knee jerk instinct was to get geared up.

Technoblade walks into the living room and finds a distinct lack of Tommy. His heart jumps, and he looks to the front door, finding it wide open.

He throws aside the thought of even grabbing a weapon. He only runs after the kid, telling Floof to stay put.

The streets past the walls are a little eerie, to be honest.

It's empty, picked clean, and while the buildings seem quiet and safe, Wilbur can't quite wrap his head around the idea of all of this being free of the undead. How much work did this guy put into making this place cleared out?

It's no wonder he has that weird nickname. Wilbur hopes he won't need to run into him anytime soon.

"It's quiet." Phil notes, walking just only a slight limp, Wilbur right behind him as they both observe the streets around them. They travel slowly, searching for some sort of light or sign that there is someone living here. So far, they haven't found any.

Does just one person really need all this space?

“You could fit a town in here.” Wilbur murmurs, thinking of the possibilities. He saw those walls, and it had been a pain to get over them. The zombie one was just disgusting, but it was easier to climb than the other ones. Granted, he nearly fell a couple times from losing his grip, but he got over the wall with mild disgust. Phil had needed a bit of help getting over, but they managed. “Like the last one we were at.”

“Maybe.” Phil hums. “Before, I would’ve thought living in the city is a stupid idea, with the hordes that pass often through, but this is...” Phil looks around, nodding his head. “This isn’t bad.”

Now if only there was an obvious base to be seen around here. There’s no lights in the windows, or make-shift extra walls, or anything that stands out. It’s just building after building, and Wilbur wonders if they’re going to have to search through each one in order to find Tommy.

At least it’s silent. That much helps Wilbur’s nerves a little bit, the lack of undead groans reaching his ears. The only noise they have here is the quiet wind howling through the air, small footsteps echoing out behind them.

Wait.

“WILBUR!” A voice echoes down the road, frantic and loud, and Wilbur flinches, and turns, eyes wide. His feet are moving before he’s even thinking of it, and he searches through the road with a burning desperation he didn’t even know he was capable of-

“WIL!” Tommy yells again, and there he is.

There he *is*.

He’s sprinting through the street without any shoes on, halfway through a sob as he screams again, his arms held out in front of him. Wilbur forgets about Phil, forgets about the city, the quiet, the ‘Blood God’, he just runs, he just goes. He nearly trips over his own two feet, trying to get across the road as fast as possible, Tommy’s name at the tip of his tongue-

Wilbur practically collapses onto the ground in front of Tommy, arms held out, and Tommy runs right into him, nearly knocking him backwards onto the cement. He sobs, something pained and deep and relieved, and he holds Tommy tight against his chest, arms wrapping around his small body, tucking his tiny head underneath his chin.

“*Tommy-*” Wilbur gasps out, his throat tight, choked up. “Tommy, Toms-” He buries his nose into Tommy’s hair, cradling him in his arms with broken whine. “Tommy, Tommy-” He repeats, whispering it like it’s the only word he knows. It’s the only word that matters. It is *all* that matters.

Tommy’s talking, blurting out his thoughts through tears, and he rambles into Wilbur’s neck with a cry, talking too fast for Wilbur to even catch it all. “-I knew it, I knew they were lying, I told him-” Tommy’s trembling in Wilbur’s arms, and he gasps in a shaky breath, tripping over his own words. “You weren’t dead, you weren’t dead, I knew it!”

“I’m not, I’m not hurt, I’m not dead.” Wilbur repeats, pulling Tommy away just so he can look him in the eyes, holding his palms against his wet face. Tommy grabs at the hands held against his cheeks, and he cries again, a near wail. “I’m so sorry, I’m *sorry-* I tried to get back to you, I did. But I-I got caught in the horde, and-”

“I waited for you!”

“*I know.*” Wilbur breathes out. “I know, I’m so sorry. You did so well on your own.” He pulls Tommy close again, letting the kid sob against his shoulder, tiny hands gripping tightly onto his backpack. He presses a kiss to the side of his head, loving and kind. “You were so brave- so, so brave, Tommy. I swear I was only trying to get back to you, I swear it-”

Tommy squeezes his arms around Wilbur’s neck, as tight as he can, and Wilbur responds by hugging him close, trying to hold him so closely that they’ll never have to lose each other ever again. He would sit here on the street ground forever, holding Tommy in his arms, if he could.

He rubs a hand up and down Tommy’s back, hearing his little brother sob over his shoulder. He whispers quiet reassurance, whispers his name, whispers ‘*I love you*’ over and over and

over, because this is all that matters. This is the only thing he needs to do.

Something feels like it's snapped, inside of Wilbur's chest, and he cries freely, ignoring the world around him. Phil can keep them safe for the time being. All he ever wants to do is hold Tommy until he's sure every single worry in his head has gone quiet.

They sit there for a moment, Wilbur keeping his arms tight around Tommy, and footsteps sound out in front of him. He opens his eyes, expecting Phil, and instead he finds someone else entirely.

Unfamiliar eyes with a face behind a mask, pink hair pulled back into a loose braid. Wilbur lifts his head with a near snarl with a stranger in front of him. He has an idea of who he might be, and he knows that means there could be a threat in the air, some sort of danger. He holds Tommy even closer, his grip nearly suffocating, and Tommy twists around with tear filled eyes, looking up at Technoblade.

Technoblade tilts his head to the side, eyes soft, and before he can say anything to try and calm that furious, deadly look on Wilbur's face, Wilbur is beating him to the punch.

"*Phil.*" Wilbur grits out, and Techno goes dead still.

"What?" Technoblade whispers, and it's left entirely unheard as Tommy screams-

"BEHIND YOU-!"

Wilbur's eyes go wide in surprise, looking down at Tommy's outstretched hand, and Techno turns, his hand reaching out and grabbing someone by the wrist, finding a gun held towards him.

Everything shifts into a quiet sort of panic, and Technoblade yanks the gun away from him, pulls back a fist with the intention of landing it against the attacker, but he looks at their face and-

And-

He freezes, his breath leaving him in one fell swoop.

Techno struggles to gasp for air, and he looks right into the eyes of a dead man.

Who looks *pissed off*.

Technoblade doesn't even get a chance to try and process what he's seeing, because then he's getting hit across the face, and he doesn't even resist, he just falls, slamming into the ground, feeling like the world is spinning around him.

"NO!" Tommy screams, and Phil falters, Wilbur struggling to hold onto Tommy as the kid kicks and screams like he's the one who's been hit. "GET THE FUCK AWAY FROM HIM! HE'S MY FRIEND, HE'S-!"

"Tommy, Tommy, stop!" Wilbur tries to keep Tommy close, Tommy squirming and crying again. Technoblade tries to sit up on the ground, wanting to say something to offer comfort, but he can't force any words out. His throat feels closed up, and he can't stop looking at *Phil*, Phil, who's-

"He's my friend, he's my friend! Wilbur, Wilbur tell him! Tell him!" Tommy shrieks, reaching a hand out to Techno. Phil stares with a shocked expression, and Technoblade can't turn away, he can't help but stare at that emotion, at the way his eyebrows are furrowing in concern, because that's not possible, it's not-

Phil doesn't do anything other than lower the gun, but Tommy takes that as a sign of him pointing the weapon at Techno, and he *screams*, Wilbur holding him around the waist, eyes wide-

“TECHNOBLADE!” Tommy yells out into the quiet night, and the very word seems to echo through the street. “TECHNO!”

“I’m-” Technoblade opens his mouth, closes it, his words feeling choked. “I’m okay.” He’s able to get out, but he sounds as if he can’t breathe. He *feels* as if he can’t breathe. It only gets worse when Phil actually looks at him, and those eyes, those *eyes*-

“Tommy, Tommy, it’s okay. We won’t hurt him, we won’t do anything.” Wilbur promises, keeping Tommy close, and Tommy kicks a bit less with his brother’s words. “We’re not going to kill him.” Wilbur says, and he gives a meaningful look at Phil, hoping to communicate for the man to put the gun away.

Phil drops the gun, instead.

It clatters onto the ground loudly, and Wilbur blinks, concern going through him. Tommy goes still, breathing hard, and he watches as Phil turns his head to him, his face looking torn.

“What- What did you say?” Phil’s voice wavers.

“Phil?” Wilbur asks.

“What did you-?” Phil repeats, looking at Techno again. “You’re-?” He looks at Techno, looks at the supposed person named the Blood God, and he doesn’t find any sort of threat, nor any sort of familiarity. There’s only that mask, covering his face, and through it, his eyes look terrified.

Technoblade kicks his legs, trying to scoot back, away from the attention placed on him, and he feels like time is slipping through his fingers too quickly. One second, he’s frozen, stuck in place, held underneath Phil’s gaze, and the next-

“Take off your mask.” Phil demands, dropping to the ground beside Techno, hands reached out towards his face. Technoblade flinches away, his heart jumping in his chest as he reaches

up with trembling hands.

“You’re- you’re supposed to be dead-?” Technoblade says, and Phil gives a sharp grin, tears brimming in his eyes. “You’re not-”

“Your *mask*.” Phil insists, grabbing at it himself and pushing Techno’s hands away. Techno doesn’t stop him. He doesn’t think he could even if he tried, he couldn’t refuse anything from someone he thought he lost so long ago.

“Phil?” Wilbur calls out, Tommy staring in worry.

Phil ignores him for a moment, pulling Techno’s mask over his head, throwing it to the side like it’s only a burden. He takes only a few seconds to look, to really look, eyes trailing over a scar that he remembers as a wound, a face that he knew-

“I know him, mate.” Phil chokes out, hands held to Techno’s face. “I know-” He cuts himself off, shaking his head. “*Techno*.”

Techno’s face scrunches up at the sound of his voice, and he holds onto Phil’s wrists, mouth opening and closing with nothing to offer.

“Technoblade.” Phil says, and that’s only something he thought he would only hear in his head, in his memories. “You’re really-?”

Technoblade nods, something frantic, and he drags in a sharp breath of air, grabbing onto Phil with a sob, realizing that he’s solid in his arms, warm and alive and real. It’s not a dream, or a nightmare, or a daydream he’s lost in.

It’s *real*.

And with nothing more he can do, Technoblade lets Phil pull him close, and he cries.

Its about the ✨family dynamics ✨

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Wilbur is-

Well. The word *overwhelmed* feels like an understatement compared to his entire emotional state.

He's still shaking with relief, hands trembling against where they're held around Tommy, pulling him close and keeping him close, never wanting to let go again. His heart still hasn't gone calm, and there's still the threat of a sob resting at the back of his throat, just waiting for another wave of emotion.

He feels as if he's breaking apart and yet entirely held together, breath shaky as he tries to process everything, anything. The road underneath his knees is a bit uncomfortable, but he sinks into it anyway, incapable of standing. He doesn't think he could get up even if he wanted to. He needs a moment. He needs several.

Tommy presses into his shoulder with a confused whine, his hands holding onto Wil's shirt, but his eyes stuck on the survivor who lives here- Technoblade.

He's Technoblade. Wilbur repeats the name in his head but it doesn't make any more sense. It doesn't ring a bell.

Wilbur doesn't have a clue who he is.

Apparently, this is The Blood God, the survivor who *made* that wall of bodies by the border, the same person who cleared out this part of the city with his own two hands. Wilbur had expected someone more dangerous, more deadly, more...intimidating.

He's crying into Phil's shoulder.

"Techno-?" Tommy goes to say, his voice a little low, and Wilbur shushes him, pulling him even closer, trying to hide his brother away from the danger. Because there should be danger here. They were expecting danger.

Phil had talked it out with him before, they had laid out a plan just in case they came across him. Phil was the better shot, the better fighter, so if push came to shove, Wilbur would grab Tommy, and Phil would keep the threat at bay.

There's no threat to be seen here.

Wilbur stares and stares and feels like the world is playing a prank, because the same survivor who was rumoured to be *deadly* is hugging Phil like he knows him. And Phil is hugging him back.

Phil keeps murmuring something into Techno's hair, words that Wil can't catch, and he slowly blinks with surprise upon realizing that Phil is crying too. It's not quite a sob, but it's still there, tears wet on his face with a slight shake of his shoulders. He wraps his arms around Techno's neck and keeps him close, and Wilbur blinks again at seeing Techno hold onto the back of his shirt like a lifeline.

("Look at you, look at you-" Phil is whispering, Technoblade choking in disbelief, something of mourning, something of an earth-shattering joy. He can't breath, can't speak, but Phil keeps talking, and he's making it *worse*. "Gods, you've changed. I didn't even recognize you, I didn't even know it was you-")

Techno opens his mouth and closes it, and there's another sob ripped from his throat and he can't *stop*. Tommy's there, Wilbur's there, he should be- greeting them, or, or reassuring Tommy, but nothing is working, nothing is making sense. Phil is supposed to be dead.

He's supposed to be- He had mourned, he had accepted that, and Phil is ripping the truth right out of his hands and burning it in front of his eyes. Nothing seems real, but Phil is wrapping his arms around his shoulders and it's so believable.

"-you're still just the same though, you really are." Phil keeps talking, and Techno never wants him to be quiet ever again.)

Wil feels confused, thrown-off. His head is a jumbled mess of questions and emotions and worries and reliefs and he can't *think*. The only blessed, constant, sure thing is Tommy in his lap, and god, Wilbur's never been more grateful for his little brother.

Tommy finally looks away from Phil to look up at Wilbur with a questioning look, as if Wil is going to have all the answers as to why Technoblade is sobbing. Wilbur doesn't have anything to offer. He feels just as confused, but he's not in the mood to ask questions and pester them for reasons and explanations. He knows Phil would explain in due time anyway.

And he knows from the way Phil seems so brokenly overjoyed, that this is something important.

Taking Tommy in his arms, Wilbur turns his back to them both, giving some sense of privacy to them and their moment. He presses a kiss into Tommy's hair and gives his attention to only him. He's the only thing that matters anyway.

"Are you okay?" Wilbur whispers, Tommy peeking over Wilbur's shoulder with a furrowed brow. He flicks his gaze back up at Wil with a frown. "You're alright?"

"Yeah." Tommy nods, digging his hands into Wilbur's shirt. "I'm okay." He says, and it doesn't sound all that steady, but it's good enough for Wil. Tommy is here, he's safe, he's alive, all's right with the world. "Are- Are you okay?"

"No." Wilbur laughs out, and god, there's a sob just *waiting* to be let loose again. He clears his throat and chokes it back. He doesn't want his eyes to be filled with tears, he wants to see Tommy's face clearly. "But I'm- I'll be fine."

Tommy makes an upset expression. “Are you hurt?” He asks, worry seeping into his tone. He sniffs, looking over Wilbur’s shoulder again, considering yelling at Techno to get bandaids. He may be crying right now, but Tommy doesn’t care. If Wil needs bandaids, then he will get them.

“No, no.” Wilbur shakes his head. “I’m just so glad to see you again.” Tommy’s mood lights up at hearing that, and the edges of his lips are pulled up into a soft smile.

Wilbur smiles back, looking down at his young face, and only then does his eyes glance up, just a little higher, to the top of his forehead where his usually blond bangs are.

“Why the *fuck* is your hair pink?” Wilbur asks, and he hears a snort from behind him. Tommy cracks a grin, and god, Wilbur really would give anything to keep that smile forever.

“I’d like to ask the same.” Phil says, and when Wilbur turns back around, he finds Techno scrubbing at his face to stop his tears, Phil holding his braid in his hand. “Of all things to do in an apocalypse...?”

Wilbur stares at Techno’s hair for a moment, blinking, and the pieces click together soon enough.

“You dyed my brother’s hair pink?!”

Technoblade coughs, waving a hand up in defense. “He asked to.”

“It looks cool, huh, Wil!?” Tommy nods, and Wilbur looks back at him, brushing his hair back with his palm. “I’m like- Like- Hey, Wilbur-!” Tommy whines as Wilbur fusses with his hair, trying to see if any more parts have been stained bright pink.

“You look like you’ve glued cotton candy to the front of your head.” Wilbur says, and Phil gives a laugh. “But yes, you look very cool, Tommy.”

“I look as cool as Techno.” Tommy points a finger at said survivor, and Wilbur turns to him with a slight glare. Techno blinks. “He’s cool, huh?”

“...yeahhh.” Wilbur says, Technoblade raising his palms up in surrender. Wilbur’s looking at him as if he’s staring into his very soul, picking out every single weakness. Honestly, it wouldn’t be hard to find them. Wilbur’s holding one right now.

Wilbur turns back to Tommy, happily saying that Tommy is incredibly cooler than Technoblade. Tommy agrees nearly instantly.

“You okay, mate?” Phil asks quietly, holding a hand to Techno’s shoulder. Technoblade swears he’s near tears all over again with just the sound of his voice.

“No.” He deadpans, Phil’s face shifting into slight concern. “Okay,” Techno says a bit louder, groaning as he wipes at his face one more time, getting to his feet. “We should- probably get inside.”

The night is still late, and while it’s not terribly cold, there’s still a bit of a chill flowing through the streets. While Technoblade knows it’s safe in his territory, not a single zombie left, his protectiveness has been dialed up to an eleven, so he’s a little on edge with being so in the open. He’d like for everyone to get inside right about now.

“Your base is nearby?” Phil asks, pushing himself up with a grunt.

“You passed by it earlier.” Technoblade nods down the road, Wilbur frowning at Phil. He doesn’t want to let go of Tommy, not for any longer than he needs to, so instead he just picks the kid up in his arms, and gives a bit of trust to Phil’s friend.

“Help Phil out- his leg is hurt.” Wil says, and Technoblade’s head snaps towards Phil with a sudden worry, an arm immediately held out to steady him.

Phil huffs, holding on loosely to Techno arm with a grin. “I’m fine, mate-”

“Oh, god, there’s blood all over your ankle, how did I not notice that-” Technoblade panics, Phil only laughing. “I can carry you?!”

“No!” Phil sputters, Wilbur tilting his head with a small smile. “I’m fine, I can walk-!”

“Who’s that?” Tommy whispers into Wilbur’s ear, Wil’s smile turning into a content grin.

“A very good friend.” Wil responds, Tommy only making a confused noise. “His name is Phil.”

“Phil.” Tommy repeats, like he’s trying the name out. “Wait. WAIT!”

Both Phil and Techno freeze from where they’re arguing over Phil’s capability of being able to walk like a couple feet, and Tommy points a finger right at Phil’s face.

“YOU’RE TECHNO’S DEAD ZOMBIE FRIEND!” Tommy yells, Phil failing at holding back a laugh and leaning over with a wheeze. Techno turns his head with a look between concerned and slightly confused and Wilbur looks at Tommy with only pure confusion.

“What?” Wil asks, Tommy ignoring him entirely.

“Yeah, yeah! Techno was talking about you, he was, he was like saying how you were dead, but you were a really good friend-!”

“Okayyy, I think that’s enough talking-” Technoblade cuts him off.

Tommy talks even louder. “AND HE REALLY MISSED YOU BECAUSE HE DOESN’T HAVE ANY FRIENDS-!”

Phil chokes on another laugh, Wilbur raising his eyebrows in question.

“-but I’m his friend now, so don’t worry, I replaced you.” Tommy hums with a nod, and Wilbur coughs out a laugh at that.

“Tommy!” Wil exclaims.

“What?”

“Alright, we’re going inside-” Techno turns to Phil, seeing him leaning over, still giggling to himself. It might also be a bit of crying. A bit of both. “Phil. Phil, I love you and I’m glad you’re not dead but please stop laughing at me.”

Phil hiccups, standing up straight with a hand to his face. “Mate.” He says, wiping at his eyes. “I missed you too.” He says, honest and true.

“I’ve cried enough for one day.” Techno responds, Phil snorting again. “Inside! We are going inside, Phil, give me your arm-”

“I CAN *WALK* -”

“No he can’t-!” Wilbur protests, just to be a little shit.

Floof begins barking the second they get to the apartment, growling sharply at the new faces coming inside. Tommy gives a noise of joy at seeing the dog, and only then does the dog seem to calm. He still growls, though.

“You have a dog?!” Wilbur asks, Phil faltering in his steps with the way said dog seems so vicious.

“Floof.” Technoblade says, helping Phil through the doorway and forcing him to sit in the kitchen right away. “Floof, they’re guests, they’re-” He glances at Wil. “Friends. Stop barking, come on.”

Floof only barks again, turning his attention to Phil. The dog *growls*, seeming seconds from snapping at Phil’s already injured leg. Wilbur stands by the corner of the kitchen, up against the counters, trying to shield Tommy away from the furious fluffy animal.

“Hey, mate.” Phil tries, holding a hand out in a placating gesture. Floof bares his teeth in response. “Okay, he doesn’t like me.”

“Hey!” Technoblade yells, the dog going quiet, finally. “Go to the living room. Go.”

“Techno.” Tommy frowns, watching the dog walk sadly away.

“He’s going to end up biting Phil.” Technoblade explains, shooing the dog off into the living room. “You and Wilbur can go keep him company while I patch Phil up.” He reaches beside Wilbur to pull open a cabinet, taking out a medkit.

“OH, OH! Wilbur-” Tommy kicks his legs, demanding to be let down, and Wilbur puts him on the floor, immediately getting dragged by the hand to the next room. “You have to come see my crayons! I did a bunch of drawings-!”

“Okay, okay-” Wilbur says, stumbling along, their voices moving away into the living room. “You have crayons-?”

Phil watches them go with a smile, putting down his backpack to the side and leaning back in his seat with a sigh. He takes the time to actually look around where he is, turning in his chair to look at Techno. The floors are clean and the counters are lit up with scattered candles. There’s no dirt or bloodstains to be found, and the place actually looks...normal.

Homey.

Technoblade searches through his medkit with a small hum underneath his breath, and he glances back at Phil, pausing when he finds Phil staring right back.

Phil smiles. “Hi.”

Technoblade falters for a moment, looking near tears once more. It shifts into something more soft, though, and he holds himself together. “Hey.”

“Techno!” Tommy calls, running into the kitchen and directly putting himself into the moment. “Where’s the lighter? I need to light a candle.”

Technoblade puts down the gauze he had been looking at, glancing around. “Uhh.”

“I’ve got one.” Phil says, digging in his coat and holding it out. Tommy snatches it from his hand and goes running right back to Wil.

Phil watches him go with an amused smile, hearing Wilbur’s voice speak softly, then-

“THANK YOU!” Tommy yells, a bit late, but still appreciated.

Technoblade huffs, shaking his head. He deems the supplies in the medkit good enough and carries the whole thing over to the kitchen table, sitting in the seat beside Phil.

“I’m sorry about Floof growling at you.” Techno says, scooting his seat to be at an angle and pulling Phil’s foot up onto his knee. “He usually reacts kinda violently to strangers, although the only times I can’t calm him down is whenever he spots a zombie.”

Phil blinks, going still. “Ah.”

“Dead or alive. I don’t think he knows the difference.” Techno hums, and Phil grimaces a bit at watching Techno peel away the bandages on his ankle to show off a bloody wound.

A bite mark.

Phil quickly leans forward, pressing his hand into Techno’s shoulder, trying to get him to look at him. The very air between them seems to freeze, silence dragging on, and Phil can hear Wilbur and Tommy in the next room, their voices light and calm.

“Phil.” Techno says, eyes wide. His hand hovers over the bite, and Phil can see the way it shakes.

He grabs at Techno’s hand. “Don’t panic. I’m fine.”

Technoblade gives him an incredulous look that’s also on the edge of panicking. “*Phil.*”

“Mate, I’ve been bit like five fucking times over the course this whole week.” Phil says quickly, voice low but honest, and he pulls at Techno’s hand, leans forward with a burning look to try and get him to move past the panic before it even settles in. “I’m- I’m immune. I’m fine.”

Technoblade blinks.

“That’s- that’s how I got out.” Phil says, and he doesn’t need to explain for Techno to know what he’s talking about. “You know that bite’s still there? It’s healed, but still-”

“Phil.” Techno repeats, and it sounds like a plea. Phil clicks his mouth shut. “That’s not-” Not possible, he wants to say. That’s not how the apocalypse is, it doesn’t give people second chances.

But Phil is right here, alive, okay, and Techno knows exactly what he saw on the day he lost him. He’s repeated the moment in his mind so often it’s become a sick curse.

And yet here Phil is.

“How?”

“I don’t know.” Phil laughs, and it’s a little frantic. “I don’t. I just- I thought I was dead, and then I wasn’t, and I’ve just-” He holds his palm out in front of Techno, jagged teeth marks in his hand, a memory of saving Wil. “I just survived.”

Technoblade takes his hand and stares at it like he’s not sure he’s seeing it right. As if inspecting it a little closer will make things go back to how he knows it, how he knows the infection should be.

The bite on Phil’s hand is scabbed over.

No one’s ever lived long enough to have a zombie bite scab over.

“Okay.” Technoblade says, and his voice cracks a bit with it, curling his fingers around Phil’s hand. “Okay, okay.”

“Techno.”

“Alright. You’re just- incapable of dying, apparently-” Techno laughs, and it’s nearly a sob. He quickly wipes the back of his hand against his eyes, and Phil moves his leg off Techno’s knee, scooting forward. He grabs Techno by the face, pulling him forward and resting his forehead against his, just like how they used to do before.

Before, like when Techno got too panicked with the death and stakes at hand, and Phil needed to calm him down.

Before Technoblade got used to the death, the gore.

Before Techno figured out how to live on his own in this fucked up world.

Techno leans into it, grateful and glad, and Phil smiles.

Chapter End Notes

Techno’s ‘backstory’ with the beginning of the apocalypse is like kinda vague tbh, and that’s on purpose, to be fair

The basic gist is that him and Phil were good friends when everything went sideways, and Phil took care of Techno, making sure he didn’t die and didn’t get hurt. Kinda like how he did with Wilbur. Then Techno lost Phil, and he figured out how to get by on his own, taking Phil’s teachings and also losing all his fucks to give.

But now they’re back together!! Hurrah!

Also I can’t fucking wait to make wholesome zombie family dynamics. How fluffy can an apocalypse get??? WE’RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT

Thanks for reading!!

oh yeah. it's all coming together

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“-and then this one I drew me with a big sword- bigger than Techno’s because I’m a big man, so I should get a really *big* sword.” The drawing in Tommy’s hands crinkles a bit as he lowers it to the ground, reaching for another. “And then- look, Wilby, look- this one I tried drawing Floof, but the white crayon sucks, so I-”

Tommy pauses suddenly, looking away from the paper. He finds Wilbur staring down at a pink crayon held carefully in between his fingers, rather than giving his attention to Tommy.

“Wil!” Tommy smacks his drawing at Wilbur’s knee, Wil jolting and dropping the crayon out of surprise. “You’re not looking!”

“I am, I am!” Wilbur protests, turning his head to his brother, but by then it’s too late, because he’s already invoked Tommy’s wrath. The kid proceeds to use the piece of paper as a shabby weapon, attacking Wilbur with no mercy.

“No you’re not!” Tommy huffs, and maybe he would seem actually angry if it weren’t for the big grin stretched across his face. A giggle leaves his throat as he leans forward to grab at Wil, trying to hit him across the head.

Wilbur holds his arms up to shield himself, laughing a bit as Tommy whacks him again. “Stop, stop-” He grabs Tommy’s wrist, pulling it away gently. “I’m listening, I’ll listen!”

He takes the drawing held in Tommy’s hand, smoothing it out and holding it as if it’s made of gold.

“Tell me about this one, go on.” Wilbur insists, and Tommy takes the paper back, then goes to snatch the pink crayon off the floor as well, scrunching his nose up at Wilbur before throwing it off to the side, where Floof is laying down beside them. Floof stares at the crayon for a moment, before putting his head back down and enjoying a nice nap.

“No crayon for you.” Tommy declares towards Wilbur, and he then scoots closer, leaning into Wil and holding up the drawing for both of them to see. Wilbur wraps an arm around Tommy’s shoulders, resting his chin onto Tommy’s fluffy hair. “Okay, so like I was saying, this one is Floof, but he’s blue, because the white crayons are shit-”

Wilbur laughs under his breath, staring at the mess of colors scribbled out across the wrinkled paper. He tries his best to listen to what Tommy is saying, really, but it’s a little hard to not just- get distracted. His mind is elsewhere, and while there is joy resting in his heart, he can’t help but have some disbelief to go along with it.

This entire situation feels surreal.

It’s almost like a bizarre, desperate hallucination, Tommy being here, safe and clean and without worry, in his arms. They’re sitting in a living room, a *normal*, homey living room, with candles lighting up the place, and a fluffy dog sitting just off to the side. There’s crayons and paper drawings scattered across the rug, Phil’s laugh echoing out from the kitchen, content, calm, with their new company.

It doesn’t feel real.

It doesn’t seem *possible*, and Wilbur is just a little convinced that this has to be some sort of strange dream. That he just has to wake up, snap back to reality, where everything is a lot less ideal than this. Where it’s, well, the literal zombie apocalypse.

The thing is, Wilbur knows this isn’t a dream, because he doesn’t fit.

He knows his dreams.

If this were a dream, he'd be just as clean as Tommy. He would be unhurt, warm, and they would both be okay, being somewhere that's out of the cold, out of the horde. It would almost be like before. Before the constant death, the constant travel, the search for something safe.

Wilbur's hands are dirty, bloody, a little cold, as they curl around Tommy's. Tommy's hands are so *small*, always so small, and for once they're not stained with mud.

Wilbur's exhausted and bruised, coming down from a long couple days filled with adrenaline. A whole opposite from Tommy, who seems to have enough energy for the both of them, his words fumbling over each other as he talks and talks and smiles and lives.

This is nothing like his dreams, but it's so similar, because even with the way there are tiny scabs scattered across Wil's skin, with the way there is still a quiet wariness crawling up his spine, Tommy still holds onto his hands, looks up at him with a sort of joy that had been dim for a long while. There's no fear in his eyes, no heavy weight from what the world has given them both.

It's only Tommy.

"Wil?" Tommy tilts his head back all the way, resting against Wilbur's chest. He frowns a little. "Are you listening?!" He asks, a warning tone in his voice saying that if Wilbur says the wrong answer, he's going to start swinging with a paper again.

"Yes, yes." Wilbur hums, pulling Tommy closer, his arms wrapping around him like a hug. "You were...talking about the dog." He squints down at the drawing in Tommy's hands. "Fluff."

"His name is Floof." Tommy corrects, his hands coming to rest over Wilbur's elbows as he puts the drawing to the side. "He eats zombies."

Wilbur glances over at the sleeping dog on the rug. He knows that there are dogs out there that can do some serious damage in the name of safety, but there is just something about this dog that makes it a little hard to believe that it could be dangerous.

“Floof!” Tommy calls, waking the dog up from sleep, and Wilbur watches as Floof sneezes, getting up, then falling back onto the ground, before stumbling awake once more. He sneezes again.

“Very intimidating.” Wilbur deadpans, and Tommy nods in a serious manner.

Floof looks at the both of them, then makes his way over, specifically to Tommy hidden away in Wilbur’s arms. He sniffs at the air, then sniffs at Wilbur’s sleeves, and Wil leans away, hesitant to be so near. This dog had been close to snapping at Phil just a couple minutes earlier, could you really blame him for being a little wary?

“Uh...” Wilbur tries to hold Tommy away, scooting back, but Floof just comes closer, slowly, like he’s not sure about Wilbur either. “Tommy, make it go.”

“Why?” Tommy says, reaching a hand out from Wilbur’s arms and patting at Floof’s fur. The dog doesn’t seem to notice, only trying to get a look at Wil. “He’s nice!”

“He’s too close.” Wilbur tries to scoot back, but he ends up just backing up into the couch behind him, and he freezes still when Floof’s snout nudges against his knuckles.

“I think he likes you.” Tommy says, Wilbur pulling his hand away when Floof starts licking it. His hands are dirty enough, he’d rather not have dog spit on it, even if said dog is endearing. “Look, look-” Tommy reaches out to Wilbur’s hand, pulling it forward again, forcing him to be held victim to Floof’s tongue. “Floof, stop licking him!” Tommy yells, as if Floof is going to listen.

Tommy directs Wil’s hand to pat at Floof’s fur, and it’s a little scuffed, a little awkward, but the moment is still warm, even with the way Floof seems absolutely dead set on trying to eat Wilbur’s hand.

Wilbur rests his hand into Floof’s fur with a breathless sigh, resting his chin onto Tommy’s hair once again. Tommy continues chattering on to Floof, giving a proper introduction to

Wilbur, and Wilbur half-listens, only wanting to stay here in this moment for as long as he can.

There is a strange sense of normalcy right here, with a dog licking at his hand, Tommy in his arms. It's nice. Better than the past few weeks, at least.

Wilbur opens his eyes with the stray thought of this being an actual new normal. Would they be allowed to stay?

With a strange tug in his heart, he realizes that truly, this is where Tommy has been for a long while. He's been here, without the threat of zombies or starvation. He's been here, in a clean apartment with candles and crayons and a fluffy dog to give his attention to. It's a good place.

Something like gratitude curls up within Wilbur's chest. Beside it, a small sliver of hope.

He doesn't trust Technoblade. Frankly, he trusts the guy about as far as he can throw him, and Wil is not a person with much strength. But this was all given by Techno. Tommy's been kept safe, kept happy, by Techno, and there's no possible way Wilbur can't just feel some sort of debt towards something like that.

Maybe they could keep this. If Phil's on good terms with the guy, they could possibly make some sort of alliance, a partnership... Techno seems like a capable guy. This could be good.

This could be a chance, if he plays his cards right.

There is no chance in hell that Techno is ever going to let these two just waltz out on their own ever again.

Both Wil and Phil are staying in this city, he will drag them kicking and screaming if he has to.

“Ow, ow-” Phil winces, Techno tending to yet *another* one of the zombie bites on his skin.

“Have you ever considered maybe *not* using yourself as a human shield?” Techno asks, adjusting the bandages on Phil’s arm. Each bite mark is making Techno lose years off his lifespan, and at this point, he’s going to just drop dead on the kitchen floor. So what if Phil is apparently immune? Techno has counted five different bites already. That is far too many.

It does not help with Phil’s retelling of him and Wilbur heading through the city. Of course, traveling through a horde, there will be danger, Techno is used to that. He expects that. Phil recounts their near death experiences and Techno assumes that the worst is over.

Then Phil keeps going. And going. And going.

Four days. Four entire days of these two just being on a constant near death adventure, hardly any time in between where they actually had somewhere not infested with zombies.

Now Techno is starting to get why Phil’s clothes are so stained with dried blood.

“I think Wil’s also said something like that- watch it-!” Phil jerks his hand away, Techno not letting go upon seeing the literal *dent* in Phil’s skin, the result of a rather violent zombie digging its teeth in a little too harshly. “That one is a bad one.” Phil hisses, and Techno resists the urge to facepalm, instead just carefully pulling off the rest of the bandages.

“They’re all bad ones.”

“Yeah, but this one was a vicious fucker.” Phil snorts, and Technoblade is considering just ending this entire zombie apocalypse with his own two hands. He killed one city’s worth of zombies. What’s a few more?

Techno huffs, reaching for a wet towel beside him that he had been using to clean off Phil's wounds. It's dirty and blood-stained at this point, but it'll do. He's just trying to make Phil look a little less...undead.

Now that he thinks about it, Phil might've been the worse out of the two, but that doesn't mean Wil is perfectly fine as well. There's a quiet hint of worry that rises up upon having that thought, and he glances towards the living room, listening for Wilbur's voice. It's faint, compared to Tommy's, but it seems steady, aware.

Well, he's sure Tommy would go screaming for Techno if Wilbur was hurt in any sort of way, so Techno is going to assume he's probably not going to die anytime soon. He turns his attention back to Phil.

"What have you been up to?" Phil asks, Techno pausing in his movement. He looks up. "Other than apparently gaining a whole reputation and scaring other survivors."

Techno scrunches his nose a bit, giving a slight frown. "Hey, I worked hard to keep this area cleared out, you can't blame me for wanting to keep it like that." He waits a moment. "Wait, what reputation?"

Phil raises his eyebrows. "The blood god thing."

Techno squints at him. "Heh?" That sounds like a cult. Techno has seen weird things in the apocalypse, he wouldn't put it past him to find out there's some cult nearby.

"The-" Phil falters a little, tilting his head. "Actually, have you even left this place and checked with other survivors?"

"Why would I ever want to do that?" Techno deadpans, looking at Phil's arm and debating if he needs stitches for this. "I'm not a people person."

“You took Tommy in.” Phil points out, and Techno waves a hand.

“Just because I have basic human decency towards a child does not make me a people person. Besides, Tommy is Tommy.” He says, as if that explains everything very simply.

Phil only gets a strange expression on his face, smiling at Techno. He doesn’t say anything more to continue the conversation, so the silence leaves Techno curious, and he glances up with confusion.

“What?”

Phil hums. “Nothing.” His smile only turns fond, and Techno looks away for the pure sake of not crying for what feels like the hundredth time today.

“Why are you-” Techno goes to ask, his question being cut off.

“Techno!” Tommy calls, both Techno and Phil raising their heads up. “Me and Wilbur are going to bed, Wilbur’s sleepy!”

“Tommy, I’m really not-”

“It’s bedtime, shut up, Wil.”

Techno lets go of Phil’s arm, immediately getting up. “Hold on.” He calls, gesturing for Phil to wait where he is. “I’m giving you a different set of clothes.” He says, passing Wilbur and heading straight towards the bedroom, Tommy dragging Wilbur along with a candle in hand.

“What?” Wilbur asks, and he glances down at his own shirt, quickly catching on. “Oh.”

“I would suggest for you to go take a bath, but to be fair, both you and Phil deserve a nap, so I’ll just hold that for later.” Techno rummages through his closet, grabbing anything that looks comfortable. He glances at Wilbur. Eh, it’ll fit. Better than that coat, at least.

Honestly, how many zombies did they kill?

He hands the clothes to Wilbur, finding Floof to be standing at Wilbur’s feet, practically leaning against his ankles. Huh.

“Thanks.” Wilbur says, taking the clothes with a strange look. He stares at the fabric with a near frown, and Techno wonders if something is wrong with it. “I- uh-”

“Okay, get out, Wilby needs to sleep.” Tommy declares, setting down the candle on the nightstand, sitting back on the bed. He reaches for Henry, looking at Techno with an expectant look.

“Tommy.” Wilbur says, but it’s not scolding, just fond.

“Come on!” Tommy pats beside him, and Wilbur laughs.

“I need to change first.”

Techno leaves them both to sleep, quickly returning back to Phil.

Chapter End Notes

Wilbur: this techno guy seems kinda sketchy but if we do this carefully we might benefit from this place

Techno: I guess Wilbur is kinda strange company but as long as he makes Tommy happy this could be fine

Both Phil and Tommy: fuck yeah family

it's time for the twinduo and angelduo arc. I can't fucking wait.

this is the equivalent of the get along shirt! *gestures at Phil and Tommy*

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The clean clothes are definitely a nice change from the ones soaked in zombie guts, Wilbur would argue.

Even with Tommy determinately insisting for them both to go to bed immediately, Wilbur still makes his way to the bathroom, changing there and trying to wash a bit of dirt out of his hair. There's probably no hope for his old shoes and coat, but he can salvage this shirt if he tries hard enough, maybe.

Wilbur huffs at the thought, pulling Techno's sweater over his head, wincing a bit with the scratches and bruises that are still healing. His hands are the worst out of it, small scrapes and cuts scattered across his knuckles, his wrists. You can't exactly just go through a near death experience without some sort of damage.

A knock sounds out from the door.

"Are you done?" Tommy whispers from the hallway, Wilbur smiling.

"Almost." He responds back, just as softly.

"Okay."

Wilbur shakes his head, folding his shirt and putting it to the side. He tries to get a good look at his hands, now that they're a bit free of dirt. Pulling the nearby candle closer, he stares at his palms with a hum, then looks up into the mirror with a frown.

To put it simply, he looks like shit.

He looks dead, and even with how he had scrubbed his face with a towel and bottle of water from Tommy, there's still a sort of air around him that signals he's a survivor who just came fresh off the road. The clothes he's wearing seem kinda out of place, compared to the exhaustion in his eyes, but they're still comfortable, soft. It's nice, especially with the way he feels so tired.

He leans against the counter to look closer at the mirror, as if maybe he just needs a better look to prove he's not that bad, but if anything it's just kinda worse up close. He thinks he has eyebags. He knows for sure where those came from.

He really does need a nap, doesn't he? No wonder Tommy was so insistent.

Another knock. "Wilby."

"I'm going, I'm going." Wilbur moves towards the door, opening it and finding Tommy standing on the other side, a lantern and a plush cow in his arms. "I'm done now." He holds a hand out towards Tommy so they can head back to bed, but Tommy just stops, staring for a second, then pushing past Wilbur to head back into the bathroom. "Wha- hey."

"You need band-aids." Tommy declares, placing the lantern onto the sink with a thunk, and carefully putting Henry down beside it. He goes to search through the kitchen cabinets, finding a box of colored band-aids nearly instantly, knowing where Techno puts them through experience. "Hold this." He says, lifting the box up towards Wilbur, and Wilbur takes it, then gets dragged not a moment later out of the bathroom, Tommy grabbing the lantern, Henry, and Wilbur's hand.

They head back down the hall, back into the bedroom, and Wilbur pauses upon seeing Floof on top of the bed, the dog lifting his head as they both walk in.

"Hi, Floof." Tommy greets, putting the lantern in its usual spot on the nightstand as Wilbur quietly closes the door.

“So,” Wilbur starts, walking slowly over to the bed, Tommy climbing on to sit beside Floof.

“Sit here.” Tommy orders, not letting Wilbur continue his thought. “And give me that box.”

Wilbur raises an eyebrow, but he listens, handing it over and sitting down on the bed, taking a single second to appreciate the fact it’s an actual bed with clean sheets and pillow and even a few animal plushies. “Tommy.” He says gently, but it’s left unheard.

Tommy opens up the box, pouring out all the brightly colored band-aids and picking out all the red ones to place in a pile to the side. He takes Wilbur’s hand in his, placing it over his knee, and Wilbur watches quietly, as Tommy slowly peels away the adhesive for each one, putting it onto Wilbur’s hand.

They sit there, in the dim light, brothers beside each other with nothing but the sound of band-aids carefully being torn open. Tommy only uses the red ones, nothing else, and he holds Wilbur’s hand as if he’s about to break apart at any second.

“I don’t like you being hurt.” Tommy admits, putting on a band-aid around Wilbur’s pinky.

“I’m okay.” Wilbur reassures, leaning forward with a hand held towards Tommy’s cheek.
“I’m here.”

“I know.” Tommy nods, leaning into Wilbur’s hand for just a second, before pulling at his hand to add another band-aid. “I know. But I didn’t-” He stops.

He didn’t really know. He couldn’t be sure. There was never any way to be sure, and even if Tommy screamed denial till his last breath, it would do nothing if Wilbur really was-

“I didn’t know if you were going to come *back* .” Tommy confesses, and it is a small, shameful thing. His hands shake over Wilbur’s, and Wil curls his fingers around his, trying to

keep them still.

“Tommy.” Wilbur says, and Tommy shakes his head.

“You were gone. You were- you were gone for so long-”

“I’m never going to leave you ever again, okay?” Wilbur says, wiping at Tommy’s face, tears falling down onto the blankets. “Never.”

“You were gone.” Tommy whispers, repeating it again.

“I know.”

“I *missed* you.” Tommy cries, curling in on himself with a sob.

“I missed you too.” Wilbur responds, pulling Tommy close into a tight hug. They both ignore the mess of band-aids, the box having fallen off the bed. “I missed you too.”

This, is a separate type of relief. A separate type of joy. It’s not desperate and sudden, like that hug on the street. This is quiet, healing, and still.

Wilbur cradles Tommy in his arms, whispering gently. He sits here in clean clothes with band-aids wrapped around his hands, and he keeps this moment here, something safe and okay.

“I was so worried for you.” Wilbur says, Tommy’s hands curling into the back of his shirt. “The moment I escaped the horde, I was only trying to look for you. I got Phil to help.” He huffs, with a bit of amusement. “We ended up fighting our way through another horde, funnily enough.”

Tommy lifts his head up so quickly, he nearly smacks Wilbur in the chin. “And you’re okay?” He asks, eyes wide. “You’re not bit?”

Wilbur shakes his head. “No. No, I’m okay.” A little bruised and battered, but not bit. Phil had made sure of that. “I’m going to be okay, Tommy.”

Tommy leans back on his knees, staring up at Wilbur like he’s trying to let those words convince him. Then he rushes forward, slamming into Wilbur and sending them both backwards onto the bed, Wilbur landing with a groan.

“Okay.” Wilbur adjusts himself, wrapping an arm around Tommy, keeping him close. “This has been enough for one day, I think.”

Tommy hums in agreement, shoving his face into Wilbur’s collar. Then he lifts his head again. “I need Henry.” He says, kicking his foot over to the stuffed cow he had put down earlier.

“Henry?” Wilbur repeats, pushing the cow up and giving it to Tommy’s outstretched hand. “Did you name him?”

“Mhm.” Tommy nods, holding Henry in front of his chest, tucking himself back into Wilbur’s side. “He’s a cow. Techno gave him to me.”

“How kind of him.” Wilbur mumbles, resting his chin onto Tommy’s hair. There it is again, that dilemma of Techno and his generosity. How much has he given to Tommy? How much can Wilbur bargain to keep?

There is a sliver of jealousy that comes with Techno being able to provide for Tommy better than Wilbur ever could, but it’s mostly overpowered with the pure worry of being able to maintain this way of living.

Most of all, though, Wilbur is just grateful. He doesn't know what he would do if Tommy wasn't safe while he wasn't there to protect him.

"What else did he get you?" He asks, honestly curious.

Tommy sniffs, thinking for a moment. "Shoes. But they're hard to put on."

"Yeah?"

"I have to *tie* them." Tommy sounds so annoyed with the mere concept, and Wilbur laughs.

Techno lights a few more candles for the kitchen.

Night has fallen over his city, and for once, it doesn't come with a sense of calmness. He still feels wound up, on guard. Like at any moment there's going to be another surprise bursting through the wall, rocking his entire worldview.

He makes tea for him and Phil.

"How has Tommy been, here with you?" Phil asks, his voice soft with the knowledge that Wilbur and Tommy had gone to bed in the room nearby. "From what I've been told, he's an interesting kid."

"He's a *loud* kid." Techno elaborates, but it's only fond. "It's a nice change from the silence, I'll give that."

Phil hums, seeming to agree. "Company is always nice."

“Sometimes.” The cups clink against the counter as Techno sets them down, pouring hot water into them both. “I wasn’t planning to get a kid.” He drops a tea bag into each one.

“I wasn’t planning to find a group.” Phil shrugs, Technoblade glancing towards him. “Here we are.”

“Here you are.” Techno repeats, not knowing what to do with the jumble of emotions curled up in his heart. “A bit worse for wear, considering you just *threw* yourself at a horde-”

“Hey-” Phil whines, Techno ignoring him and giving his attention to the cups in hand. He walks over to the table, setting them down carefully, then taking his spot beside Phil. The chair creaks quietly as he leans back.

“I’m still alive.” Phil points out, pulling his cup closer, and Techno kicks him underneath the table. Phil gives a hiss of pain.

“Barely.” He doesn’t react when Phil kicks him back, only fiddling with his tea bag. “I’m glad that’s over with, though. No more life threatening situations for at *least* a week.”

Phil shifts in his seat, something hesitant on his expression. Techno’s heart drops a bit.

“What?” He raises an eyebrow. Phil gives a small pained smile.

“Well…” He curls his hands around his cup. “There *is* another thing.”

Techno pauses, then sighs, leaning forward and hitting his face into the table, his arms curling over his head. He groans, Phil laughing softly.

“It’s not that bad.” Phil says, reaching forward and giving a light pat on his shoulder. He stops with a thoughtful look. “Well. Kinda.”

“Alright.” Techno sits back up, shaking his head. “Lay it on me, come on. Are you bleeding out somewhere? Is *Wilbur* bleeding out somewhere? Were you guys followed?” He goes through the list, trying to think of the worst. He leans in towards Phil. “If you were followed, what’s the estimated number of people?” He could take on a survivor group if he really had to. Setting a few traps around the city wouldn’t be hard.

Phil snorts, holding a hand over his mouth. “We *were* followed, but not by people.” He sits back in his seat, tugging at the bandages on his arm. “The horde, remember? It’s not just staying in the city, it’s going in this direction. Past here.” *Through* here, he doesn’t say, but it’s a chance.

“I’ve gone through hordes before.” Technoblade insists, but he sounds hesitant. “My walls could take it.”

“This was one hell of a fucking horde, mate.” Phil chuckles, a little frantic with it. “It went on for *blocks*. Just- a whole sea of them, there was no end! Me and Wil are lucky we even got through that.”

Techno frowns. He tries to think when was the last time he checked his defences. Really checked them. He’s been busy with Tommy these days, and he knows he’s been slacking with patrol, too.

He should’ve known that was going to come back to bite him.

“You think it could get in?” Techno asks, Phil shrugging.

“I’m not saying your walls aren’t good. But you really never know.” It’s true. Even with the biggest, most sturdy walls, there have still been towns who fall to the occasional horde.

“I’ll check tomorrow morning for any gaps. Try and reinforce it, if I can.” Technoblade promises, rubbing a hand at the back of his neck. “If the worst happens, it should still be safe for you guys up here.”

“I’ll head out with you tomorrow morning to check.” Phil offers, leaning forward. Techno shakes his head.

“No.” Techno takes a single glance at the amount of pathetic bloody bandages left on the table, and he’s made up his mind on that. “You aren’t going anywhere until you can actually walk.”

Phil narrows his eyes with a sip from his mug. “I can walk.”

“You have a literal hole in your leg.” Techno insists. “You’re *limping*.” He points out.

“You say that like you haven’t been limping as well.” Phil says lightly, referencing at Techno’s messed up leg, and they both seem to pause, memories flowing back.

For a second, it feels like before, feels like when they were in that broken car, the horde creeping up far too quickly. Smoke in their lungs and panic in the air, Techno *remembers*.

Then they’re back, in a quiet kitchen with cups of tea on the table. Technoblade pretends like the scar on his face doesn’t itch, and he stares down at Phil’s hands, at the bite wound placed into his palm. The world seems so quiet, and he doesn’t know what to do with it. Phil breaks the silence, thankfully.

“How did you manage?” Phil asks gently, seeming to look somewhere past Techno’s eyes. “With everything?”

Phil’s hands seem so dirty and worn, even with the way Techno’s bandaged them up, and Techno wants to echo that question back at Phil. How, how could there have ever been a way for this to even happen? For Techno to actually keep what he had lost?

Techno is alive out of spite, in spite of what the universe has torn away. And here, the universe gifts it back, like some sort of reward for his struggles.

“I found a survivor camp.” Techno says slowly, his throat feeling tight. “Got back on my feet in there, but that didn’t really last.” Nothing lasted in the early days. Everything had been so uncertain during those weeks. “I ended up traveling on my own. Went a long way, got tired of traveling, and ended up here. Thought I’d hunker down, keep to myself.”

Phil takes a drink from his tea before saying anything. “So you went and killed hundreds of zombies, then, and took the city for yourself.” He says it with pride, and Techno nearly laughs. “Not bad.” He grins, and Techno leans his chin onto his palm, smiling.

“And you? After we-” He falters, and picks his words back up. “-we split ways, where did you go?”

“With a survivor group.” Phil says plainly. “They agreed to help me out, but after they saw I was bit, they ended up leaving me on the side of the road.”

Techno blinks. Something like anger simmers through him.

“At least they didn’t shoot me.” Phil points out, seeming unphased. “I kept moving. I wasn’t...really all there, if I’m honest. Those days were blurry.” He felt like a dead man walking, a zombie shuffling through the street, but he still kept breathing, kept living. There was a healing bite dug into his arm, and he was *alive*. “Ended up robbing a base that got left behind. Stayed mostly to myself, adjusted with it. Started visiting towns.”

“But you didn’t stay?” Techno asks.

“Never.” Phil holds his cup towards his lips, but he doesn’t drink from it. “I couldn’t.” And why would he, with that first encounter? All it takes is one person knowing. All it takes is simple panic, and a gun with a bullet. “I did make friends, though. I might’ve kept my distance, but I still helped out. I couldn’t just *not* when I was literally immune.”

“How many times have you gotten bit?” Techno asks, sounding almost exasperated with it. Phil wheezes a little.

“Before Wilbur? Like three times. After? I lost count.”

“Wilbur.” Techno repeats, like he might as well be the bane of his existence, and Phil laughs, taking another sip of his tea.

“You’ll warm up to him.”

Techno raises an eyebrow. “I’m pretty sure he’s still pissed at me for dying his little brother’s hair pink.”

“Tommy is everything to him.” Phil says. “And Tommy is important to you.” He points out, reaching over and poking Techno in the arm. “Find common ground.” He deadpans.

Techno barely restrains himself from rolling his eyes. “You’re saying we should get along.”

“I’m not saying you *should* get along, I’m saying you’re *going* to get along.” Phil waves a hand. “Because Wilbur means something to me, and so do you. I’m not letting either of you go, so if you’ve got any issues, better burn them up now.”

Techno snorts, looking away. He fiddles with his cup of tea, which at this point, has gone a little cold. He takes a drink from it so he’s at least not wasting it. “He’s alright. Tommy’s told me stories. I’m just pretty sure he hates me.”

“He doesn’t hate you.” Phil reassures. “He just doesn’t like strangers.” He clarifies helpfully, and Techno doesn’t feel comforted.

Tommy wakes up slowly, with his eyes feeling kinda puffy, and his face squished into someone's shirt with arms held tightly around him.

At first, he assumes it's Technoblade, and he leans in with a hum, closing his eyes again and feeling content, safe. Then slowly, the events of the day start to slip back into his head, and he snaps his eyes open again, going still. His heart seems to slam against his ribs with a sudden fear, fearing that this was a dream, all in his head.

Very carefully, he moves back a bit, freeing himself and tilting his head up, finding Wilbur's tired, sleeping face before him. Just the sight of it seems to calm every single last worry in Tommy's mind.

His brother is here.

Wilbur is okay. Alive. *Here*, with him.

Tommy sighs out quietly, settling back into where he is, picking Henry back up in his hands. He holds the plush close to his chest, and rests his forehead against Wilbur's shoulder.

The lantern at the nightstand has gone a bit dim, and Floof has moved off the bed to his own doggy bed on the floor. There's still band-aids scattered underneath them, and the room is almost entirely quiet, save for the faint voices coming from the kitchen.

Tommy pauses. He almost goes to turn behind him, hoping for Techno to be here as well, but he is nowhere to be found. He's not here, only Wilbur is.

Now this is a problem. Tommy refuses to go back to bed without having everything where it should be.

Very, very slowly, Tommy inches his way out of Wilbur's arms, escaping from his hold. He wants more than anything to just stay there, fall back to sleep in his brother's company, but it's not right with Techno missing. He wants both Techno *and* Wilbur here.

He crawls off the bed, Henry held by one arm as he goes for the door, opening it quietly and giving one more look towards Wilbur to make sure he's sleeping good.

He's barely even moved in his sleep. Tommy goes back to yank a blanket over him, and then goes back to the door, opening it quietly and heading out into the hallway.

From here, he can hear both Phil and Techno, still talking underneath the dim light of their candles around the apartment, and Tommy stomps over, wanting to be asleep.

But he cannot be asleep if Techno is not asleep with him, so he's just going to make them sleep. No more talking.

"Techno!" Tommy whispers, heading into the kitchen without an ounce of hesitation. Both Phil and Techno whip their heads towards him, a little surprised.

"Oh." Phil says, putting a cup down on the table. "Hey, mate."

"Shouldn't you be asleep?" Techno asks, a hint of a scolding in there. "What are you- hey-" Techno pauses upon having Tommy walk straight up to him and yank him by the arm. "Tommy."

"Go to bed." Tommy says, with all the anger a seven year old could muster. "I'm tired, I wanna go to sleep, but you aren't in *bed*."

Techno blinks. Phil holds a hand over his mouth with something like a poorly hidden laugh.

"You can go to sleep with Wilbur, can't you?" Techno bargains. "You have him."

Tommy narrows his eyes at him, giving an expression that very clearly communicates that he is not here to talk about the other options of going back to bed, he is here to grab Techno, and then go back to sleep.

Techno stammers a bit as Tommy pulls at his arm again. “Look- Me and Phil are still catching up. We’re talking-” He gestures towards Phil, and Tommy turns his attention upon him.

Tommy points a finger up, Phil jolting back and staring at the cow plush held in his hand. “You. You’re going to bed too.” He says to Phil, and Phil barely holds back a snort at that.

“Tommy.” Techno deadpans. Tommy pulls at his arm again.

Phil scoots his chair back, standing up on his feet with a sigh. “Well, I guess he’s right.”

“Phil-”

“The child has spoken, time to head off to sleep.” Phil nods, and Tommy seems rather satisfied with that sentence. He’s decided he likes Phil.

Techno tries to protest against it, but Tommy is tugging at him again, and up he goes, stumbling on his feet as Tommy drags him out of the kitchen, into the living room.

“Should I sleep on the couch?” Phil asks, Techno trying his best to not let Tommy just pull him away.

“What? No, I can take the couch, the bed should be fine for you guys-” Techno insists, Tommy pulling at his hand with all his strength.

Tommy makes a frustrated noise, reaching forward and grabbing Phil by the hand. “You’re both going to *bed*.” He declares, and then yanks them both down the hall.

“Tommy-”

“Mate-”

They all stop, and Tommy turns around before leading them through the bedroom door. He whispers quietly.

“If you wake up Wilbur, I’m killing you both.” He threatens, giving a burning glare. They both nod in agreement, and Tommy hums, pulling again.

They head into the room with no choice left, and Tommy ends up resting back underneath Wilbur’s arms, Technoblade right behind him, where he should be. Phil stays beside Techno, chuckling quietly as Techno whispers at him to stay quiet, lest they invoke the wrath of the child.

Chapter End Notes

im not quite sure if this chapter like hit its mark like I was hoping for but yknow, I tried, and that is what matters

thanks for reading!

pardon me sir, I feel a bit under the weather

Chapter Notes

content warning for like, puking. It's not like graphic but yknow. It's there.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Wilbur wakes up feeling warm.

He's warmer than usual, and right off the bat, that sends more than a few warning sirens through his head. Because from his experience, whenever he's sleeping, it's in a shelter with holes in it, letting the cold through. So either he's not sleeping in the cold, or something is wrong.

His knee jerk reaction is to assume the latter.

He opens his eyes to find a roof over his head and a blanket thrown over his legs. His throat *aches*, and he blinks blearily into the dark, trying to get his mind online, trying to breathe. Everything feels- stuffy. Warm, once again.

Closing his eyes with a huff, Wilbur tries to think. He's traveling with Phil. That's right. They were heading to the base where Tommy was being kept, and, they were going through the horde-

And like a bucket of water being thrown over his head, he finally catches up with current events.

It's like a blur of memories, Tommy, Techno, that fluffy little dog. He breathes in sharply, opening his eyes and turning his head to the side, finding that he's not alone in bed.

Tommy sleeps curled up around his tiny stuffed cow, his feet pressed against Wilbur's hip as he drools onto his pillow with a quiet snore. Just beside him, Wilbur makes out the figure of someone else sleeping in their bed, and he realizes with a jolt that it's Techno.

He lifts his head just barely to get a better look, and he finds Phil next to him too, all of them resting and sleeping soundly side by side in this dark, quiet room.

"What the fuck." Wilbur breathes out, confusion weighing in heavily. When did they get here? Wasn't it just him and Tommy sleeping? Was there just nowhere else for Phil and Techno to rest?

Upon looking over the bed once more, Wilbur does note the fact that it *is* indeed big enough to let them all rest comfortably without problem. Tommy is kinda taking up both his and Techno's personal space, and Phil looks kinda squished against Techno, but other than that, it's not the worst sleeping conditions. Maybe this is just how the sleeping arrangements are. Having everyone nearby so it's easier to get them awake during an emergency. That would make sense.

Wil sighs as he lies back down again, and he kicks off the blanket sitting over him, wanting to be free of the insufferable heat that's sticking to his skin. Is he just that unfamiliar with sleeping in an actual bed?

He swallows with a dry mouth, and notes the still present ache in his throat. Maybe this isn't a matter of not being used to not sleeping on the ground. There's still that stuffiness in his head, like cotton filling up his skull, making it hard to think properly.

He turns to look off the bed, towards the bedroom door. Through the dark, he can see it being left slightly open, a peek into the dim hallway.

Well.

Everyone is asleep, aren't they? Phil is right there for Tommy if anything bad happens. Techno looks pretty knocked out.

Technically, there's nothing stopping Wilbur from just searching around for a bit of water.

The idea sounds irresistible, with the way everything feels uncomfortably warm. Wilbur would *kill* for a bottle of water right now. He knows he's got one in his backpack, but that's not with him, rather, it's somewhere in the living room, most likely. He vaguely remembers leaving it there.

Sitting up from the bed, Wilbur swings his legs over with his mind set, resting his feet onto the carpet ground. His head spins with the movement, and he leans forward with his eyes squeezed shut, everything still feeling too warm, too slow.

He's fine.

It passes eventually, and Wil stands up on shaky legs, the idea of venturing out for water seeming less and less unappealing by the second. He's shivering, even with the warmth, and he heads for the door, pushing it open and stumbling out into the hall with a hand held against the doorway.

He keeps a hand on the wall for some sense of support, and as he stares down the hallway, it only now sinks in just how *dark* it is. A pang of fear runs through him, and he can feel his heart slam against his ribs, regret sinking down his shoulders. It doesn't help with the way he almost feels like he's swaying on his feet, ready to drop.

This feels like a bad idea. At first, water sounded great, but now, Wil feels as if he's heading right back into that zombie horde, right back into the jaws of danger with not even a single weapon in hand. He bites at the inside of his mouth, glancing back into the bedroom.

He's fine.

He walks down the hall, through the dark, trying to fit logic through the fog in his head. They're in Techno's base. It's relatively safe, especially up in a secure building. If anything were to happen, he could just scream, and Phil wouldn't be so far.

The thoughts offer slight comfort. Wilbur keeps walking slowly, heading into the living room and finding relief in the moonlight that's coming through the screen door. It shines down onto the drawings still scattered across the carpet, and from here, Wilbur can pick out the doodles that Tommy had been earnestly showing him earlier. He smiles down at them as he wraps his arms around himself, moving away from the wall.

He steps over the drawings carefully, not wanting to wrinkle a single one, and he slowly makes his way past the living room, right into the kitchen, the tile being cool against his feet. He raises a hand to the nearby counter, leaning against it with a tired sigh.

Wait.

He had been here for his backpack. That's in the living room, not the kitchen.

Wilbur turns, looking at the living room again, but not stepping away from the counter. Where did he even leave his backpack? He can't see it from here, and he can't for the life of him remember where he put it down.

With a huff, Wilbur presses his knuckles against his forehead, trying to remember. He can't think. Everything is too warm, and he's exhausted just from moving over here, and what are the chances Techno just has water laying around somewhere in his kitchen?

He glances at the table with a twinge of hope, and then curls in on himself as the temperature suddenly shifts from being too warm to being strangely cold.

He's fine.

Except his stomach churns with something more than just slight fear of the dark, and he shivers with a horrible feeling climbing up his throat. He covers his mouth with one hand, breathing in deep, eyes flicking around the kitchen. He stares at the sink, then looks away.

He's *fine*.

But his hands are shaking against the counter and his face, and sheer willpower isn't going to make his stomach settle. Wilbur leans his head forward with a quiet whine, trying to insist upon himself that he's just nervous. He's just scared of the dark, and he went stumbling around in the dark, so that's the only reason he feels *sick*.

He's okay. It's okay. He just needs to grab some water, then he can head back to bed, and pass the fuck out.

There's spit filling up his mouth, though, and even as Wilbur stumbles forward with a shaky gasp, he continues to tell himself that he's fine, he's fine.

He's-

...puking into the sink with a sob.

This is about as terrible as he remembers it. It doesn't help with the fact it's still dark, suffocating shadows completely surrounding him, no protection against any sort of threat that could be nearby. Wilbur is hardly in any shape to fight, he's only leaning over into the sink and losing what little lunch he had, heart pounding too quickly in his chest.

It stops for a moment, and Wilbur catches his breath, panting with tears at the edge of his eyes. He tries to think, tries to pick apart the reason why he's gotten nauseous, but it's not long before he's going for another round. He loses his thoughts.

"Ah, geez." Someone says, and Wilbur jolts, making a pathetic noise of suffering. "Okay, okay, hold on, let me-" There's footsteps pacing quickly through the kitchen, and the sound

of a cabinet being opened.

Wilbur listens as something opens with a quiet crack, and he watches numbly as a hand reaches in beside him, pouring water down the sink to wash away the bile.

He nearly goes to ask for a drink of that water, since that's the whole reason he got up in the first place, but his stomach isn't done with him. He gasps for air, then leans back down, dry heaving with another sob. He squeezes his eyes shut.

His throat hurts, there's tears in his eyes, Wilbur hates it here, he hates this, he fucking hates everything. All he wants is to go back to bed with Tommy beside him, without feeling like shit, is that so much to ask?

Faintly, he hears the sound of a lighter, the clink of something being set down onto the counter beside the sink. He flinches when a cold hand brushes by the front of his face, and he just now barely processes that it's *Techno* who's standing next to him.

"It's just me." Techno whispers, keeping his voice low as if he's afraid of spooking Wil. "Okay? I'm just going to—" He doesn't finish the sentence, instead just grabbing at Wilbur's curls, bringing his hair up out of his face.

Wilbur doesn't give much of a response, but there's a wash of gratitude settling in his chest, along with relief as finally, his stomach decides to give him a break. He lifts his head up just the slightest bit, blinking his eyes open and finding the soft light of a candle beside him, sitting on the counter.

He stares at it for a moment, catching his breath, Techno's hands falling away from his hair.

"You done?" He asks, and Wilbur drops his head, simply nodding. God, he feels too heavy. Fuck this. "Uh—" Techno's hand makes a failed grab at the back of Wilbur's shirt.

Wilbur decides that standing takes too much work. He slides down onto the kitchen floor, leaning against the wooden cabinets with a groan. The tile feels cold against his palms. He presses his fingers against it, closing his eyes again with a huff.

“Alright, then.” Techno says, reaching over for the candle to bring it down to the ground.

“This is fine.” Wilbur mutters, trying to hide away into the cabinet beside him. A chill runs through him, and now he’s freezing, he’s ice cold, teeth practically chattering. He wants to go back to bed. He wants Phil.

Techno’s brushing a hand against his face again, but it’s only to check his temperature, a palm against his forehead. Wilbur tries to lean into it as much as possible, not wanting to turn into a fucking ice cube here on the floor. It doesn’t stay, though, and Techno moves on to rolling Wilbur’s sleeves up, raising his arm up like he’s looking for something.

“I’m not bit.” Wilbur huffs, trying to force as much confidence into that sentence as possible. He doesn’t know Techno’s protocols for infected people. Wilbur could either be thrown outside or locked into a room, anything is possible.

“Don’t think you are, but still. Habit.” Techno hums. With the way Phil had been covered with injuries, there’s no doubt he had put his all into making sure Wilbur stayed uninfected. “I think it’s just a fever.” Techno pulls his sleeves back down.

“Fuck’s sake.” Wilbur swears, shivering and trying once more to just become one with the cabinets. “Can I-” He huffs, pulling his knees up. “Water?” He asks.

“Yeah, give me a sec.” Techno stands up, and Wilbur squints at him from the floor, watching him go fetch another water bottle, twisting it open before handing it to Wil.

Wilbur takes it with an overwhelming amount of relief, and he practically chugs it, reveling in the fact he’s finally got his fucking water. Begone, dry mouth.

Techno immediately pushes at the bottle to make Wilbur tilt it back down. “You’re going to end up puking all over again.” He forces Wilbur to hold the bottle upright. “Small sips.”

Wilbur frowns, looking back down at the bottle. Techno does have a point, there. But now he doesn’t feel all that thirsty anymore, and he doesn’t bring the bottle back up to his lips. He just sets it down, feeling tired.

“Okay.” Techno puts the cap back onto the water bottle, resting the back of his hand onto Wilbur’s forehead once more. Wilbur closes his eyes, heart pounding in his chest. “I’m- I’m going to go get Phil.”

A jolt of fear strikes through Wil for a second, and he grabs at Techno’s sleeve as he pulls away, his grip weak. He lets go almost right away, regret washing through him, but the reaction is enough for Technoblade to change his mind.

“Phil!” He calls instead, voice echoing down the hall. Wilbur groans and tries to slide down further onto the ground. “Hey- come on, you can go sit on the couch instead of the floor.” He says to Wilbur, holding on gently to his arm.

“Ugh.” Wilbur only says as a response, and Techno calls for Phil once more.

It’s still freezing cold. The ground is *cold* against Wilbur, but it’s a solid surface, and Wilbur just kinda wants to sprawl out across it and pass out, maybe. He’s got this candle beside him, he’s got Techno giving watch. Good enough for him, really. He probably won’t die.

Then again. A couch does sound really good right now.

But also. He does not want to move. Fuck this. He’s sleeping on the kitchen floor, no one can stop him.

“Oh, *shit* .” Phil’s voice echoes out, something concerned and worried, and Wilbur decides that maybe that someone will stop him, actually. “Wil? Wilbur?”

“He’s okay. Somewhat.” Techno says, and Wilbur’s blinking his eyes open, being met with arms pulling him up off the ground into a hug. It’s warm. He doesn’t protest, only trying to lean into it, his eyes closing again. “He was throwing up.”

“Fuck.” Phil swears, and there is slight panic just at the edge of his voice. Wilbur frowns. “Wilbur, you still with us, or are you out cold?”

“Mhm.” Wilbur responds eloquently, tilting his head up. “I’m living.”

“Barely.” Techno deadpans, and Wilbur snorts.

“Techno, light more candles, will you?”

Wilbur doesn’t hear Techno say anything in response, but he does hear the sound of a lighter being used, and when he turns his head away from Phil’s shoulder, he finds the kitchen to be just a bit brighter. Phil holds him close, brushing his hair back.

“You’re not infected, are you?” Phil asks softly, sounding almost devastated with the possibility.

“No.” Wilbur responds, shaking his head. “No, I’m not.” If he was, he’d be honest with it. There’s no way in hell he would put all of them in danger with a bite mark in his skin. “Tommy?” He asks, concern swirling in his chest. If both Techno and Phil are here, then Tommy is sleeping all alone.

“Hello?” Tommy’s voice comes from down the hall.

Or, he was.

“Over here, mate.” Phil calls, raising his head as Tommy quickly heads over to the kitchen to see why everyone’s gotten up out of bed. He freezes in his steps at seeing Wilbur on the ground, held in Phil’s arms.

“Wil-” Tommy runs over, and Wilbur kicks his legs, trying to move. “Wilbur?!”

“No, no, Tommy stay there-” Wilbur insists, pushing away from Phil. “Stay there, stay there.” He can’t have Tommy get sick. If he’s sick, then there’s a chance of Tommy getting it too, and Wilbur can’t have that. Never.

“Wil.” Phil says over his head, and Wilbur shakes his head.

“Don’t- Don’t let him-” Wilbur tries to say, and Phil shushes him. “He can’t get sick.”

“Okay. Okay, mate.”

“What’s-” Tommy stopped in his tracks, but it doesn’t stop the look of distress on his face. He hugs Henry to his chest, eyes wide. “Are you okay?!” He yells towards Wil, Phil turning to him with a small reassuring smile.

“He’s alright.” Techno reassures, quickly kneeling down beside Tommy, holding a hand out. Tommy turns to him, Techno keeping his tone gentle. “He’s just sick.”

Tommy’s eyes go impossibly wider. “Is- Is he bit?” He chokes out, voice small. There’s near terror in those words of his.

“No.” Techno says firmly. Tommy’s eyes fill with tears of relief. He hugs Henry a little closer. “No, it’s just a fever. He’s not infected.”

“Really?”

“Really.” Techno nods, holding a hand to Tommy’s arm.

“He just doesn’t want you too close, mate. He might puke all over you.” Phil says, going for a lighter tone.

Tommy’s nose scrunches in disgust, but then he settles into something relieved, then concerned, grabbing at Techno’s hand with his attention turned towards Wil.

Phil’s keeps an arm around Wilbur, practically being the only thing that’s stopping him from just sliding down onto the floor to embrace it as a sleeping place. Wilbur leans into him with a huff, a wave of exhaustion settling down over him. He wants to reassure Tommy, he wants to go back to bed, he wants, he wants-

“We need medicine.” Tommy’s voice fills his ears, and he just listens. “You have medicine, right?”

“Yeah, down in the storagehouse.” Techno responds. “I’ll get it right now. We should probably move Wil to the couch, though.”

There’s a hand brushing at his hair. “Wil? Think you can get up for a bit?” Phil asks.

Wilbur frowns. Does he really need to move? Is this not good enough, here on the kitchen floor, Phil’s arms keeping him from freezing into ice? It’s good enough for him.

“I’ve got him.” Techno says, stepping closer.

“You sure?” Phil’s pulling away for a moment, and Wilbur makes a disappointed noise, then jolts when he’s suddenly just- not on the ground anymore. Goodbye, kitchen tile. Twas nice while it lasted.

“Yeah.” Techno says, and Wilbur’s being carried, right out of the kitchen. Tommy follows right at Techno’s heels, completely focused on Wilbur and Wilbur only.

The couch is a much better upgrade from the ground, now that Wilbur’s actually laying on it. He practically sinks into the cushions, curling up and trying to gather some warmth, now that Phil’s not here to give it to him.

“Tommy, mate, could you go get some blankets for Wil?” Phil asks, sounding near.

“Yeah!” Tommy agrees nearly instantly, and he runs off down the hallway, dead set on getting only the best blankets for his brother.

Wilbur loves him so much. He’s going to throttle the universe for daring to give him a fucking *fever* upon the first day of having him back.

“Wilbur?” Phil says, sitting by the couch, right beside Wilbur’s head. “You alright here?”

Wil cracks an eye open, looking over Phil’s shoulder to find Techno bringing in a few candles, putting them around to keep the living room at least a bit brighter.

The warm light is comforting, and already, Wilbur feels miles better than how he was just before he went and threw up into the sink. This feels safe. Warm, somewhat. He could still use a blanket, to be honest.

“Wil?” Phil asks again, Techno hovering close as Wilbur turns his attention to Phil’s face. He looks so worried up close, and so very human. His hair is pulled back into its usual ponytail, his eyes bright as he reaches a hand out towards Wilbur once more. He’s just so painfully familiar, and Wilbur feels so fond.

“Dad.” Wil mumbles, and he watches Phil freeze. He closes his eyes, huffing. Faintly, he realizes what he said, but with the exhaustion and the fever, it doesn’t quite sink in. All he knows is that it feels about right. And he wants to pass the fuck out.

“Oh.” Phil says, seeming still a little stuck. He might be emotional. Who knows. Not Wilbur.

“I’M BACK!” Tommy yells, thankfully keeping the time moving. Techno coughs in a way that might be a laugh, perhaps, and Phil turns, watching Tommy come over with an armful of blankets.

“Thank you, Tommy.” Phil says, reaching out and taking them to put over Wil.

“I’ll be right back.” Techno calls out, heading towards the kitchen to leave through the front door. “Keep an eye on him, Tommy!” He says, Tommy nodding very seriously.

“Wilbur, Wil.” Tommy says, coming up near Wilbur’s face as Phil busies himself with putting blankets over him. “Are you asleep? You look asleep.”

“Hm.” Is all Wilbur gives, and Tommy nods like he’s given an actual response.

“Here, here.” Tommy shoves Henry into Wilbur’s hands. “So you can sleep better.”

Wilbur means to open his eyes and thank him for the gift, but Phil’s tucking a blanket around his shoulders, and the world is fading out, sleeping pulling him right under.

Chapter End Notes

IT IS 2 AM!! *slams into the ground and passes out immediately*

"That's my son!" *punches zombie dramatically*

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

So.

Phil is- not panicking. No.

He's actually rather calm.

So calm. He's the calmest he's ever been in this godforsaken apocalypse. He keeps fidgeting and messing with the blankets, and Tommy's giving him a funny look as he paces around the living room, but that's not important, because he is calm, and collected, and he absolutely has his shit together.

Ignore the fact that his half-dead heart is dying at the moment. Seeing Wilbur practically passed out on the ground spooked him a bit, and for good reason, they've been traveling together for a while. Phil's put his all into keeping Wil safe, and you don't exactly go through like twenty different life-threatening situations without a little bit of bonding. Needless to say, he cares for Wilbur. For his well-being, for his happiness, his comfort, safety.

Phil pauses a bit. With a hum, he wonders when exactly Wilbur just became...important.

At what point did Wil go from someone he was just helping out to someone who he couldn't leave behind?

Could've been during the horde. Phil pulling Wilbur to safety, pushing him behind him, over and over and over, everything in him *screaming* to not let a single zombie grab a hold of Wil. There had been a bit of a burning feeling, there, something brutal and restless, unwilling to let go, unwilling to let anything drag Wil away.

It must've been before that. After finding Dream? The sight of Wilbur after being faced with failure to find Tommy had been something that could pull sympathy out of anyone, to be honest. But Phil wasn't exactly comforting Wilbur with just pity in his heart. There had been something more, there.

Wil had asked him to go, and Phil's knee-jerk reaction had been *no*. Never.

So, even further back then. Maybe it was the sleepless nights, Wilbur fitfully going to bed, waking up with nightmares, Phil offering a story to calm him down. Maybe it was the rations, the need to make sure Wil wasn't going to be starving to death anytime soon. Maybe it was the sight of an axe over Wil's head, Wilbur screaming in fear as everything in Phil told him to go save him, *protect* him, fire the gun-

Maybe it doesn't really matter.

Phil readjusts the blankets on Wilbur again. He doesn't stir. Tommy continues to stare at his face, leaning in close like he's trying to hear a snore from his brother.

This isn't exactly the worst thing that could happen, if Phil is to be honest. Part of him is unsteady with the thought of even being *considered* as some sort of parental figure, because that means attachments, that means he has to stay, and if he stays, it means he puts others at risk.

But then again. The virus running through Phil's blood is nothing compared to the speed at which he'll wield a gun if any threat were to come near. The pros outweigh the cons by a landslide. Keeping Wil's company is a gift he wants to cherish. Watching him grow and thrive is something he wants.

Would Wilbur want that? Does he already think of Phil like that? Like someone he can trust to watch over him?

Phil huffs, pushing hair out of Wilbur's face, Tommy leaning against the sofa with closed eyes and a frown.

"Mate." Phil whispers, and Tommy's eyes snap open. "You can head off to bed, if you want."

Tommy narrows his eyes as if he's been insulted to his face. "No."

"Wil's going to be asleep for a while."

"I'm staying with him." Tommy declares, and that is that, he's made his decision. He'll sleep on the carpet ground if need be.

Phil smiles, something heavy in his heart. For a moment, the panic of everything just settles, and he's only left with a fond emotion.

"Then why don't you get some pillows and set them down here? Blankets, too."

"Like a sleepover?" Tommy asks, eyebrows raised.

"Yeah." Phil nods.

Tommy tilts his head, seeming to consider it. Then he nods, looking determined, and he jumps onto his feet, running down the hall so he can quickly return to Wilbur's side.

Phil watches him go, turning back to Wilbur, that quiet feeling of panic starting up again. The more he dwells on it, he finds that it's not really panic, exactly. More like- shock? Surprise?

He rests a hand over Wil's forehead, feeling it warm against his palm. For a moment, Wilbur murmurs underneath his breath, lost words, and Phil's heart gives a jump as he hears it. As if he's anticipating for Wilbur to call him dad once more.

Wilbur doesn't say anything. He only mumbles and drifts off again, Phil feeling something protective curl up inside his chest.

To be entirely honest, it makes sense for Wilbur to *see* him like that. From what he's gathered, Wil's always been the one to stand tall, make the calls, make the hard decisions. He's always looked after Tommy, traded his own safety for his little brother's. For once, Phil's changed that a little. For once, this is different.

Phil can look after them both for now. Wilbur doesn't need to do a thing other than rest. There isn't any danger to be found here, at least not with Phil nearby.

Tommy returns with his armful of blankets, a pillow held in his hand. He dumps it onto the floor and flops onto it unceremoniously, Phil laughing a little under his breath.

"Comfy?" He asks, grinning down at Tommy. Tommy sticks his tongue out at him, childish and a tad bit grumpy. He *had* woken up earlier alone, walking into the kitchen with Wilbur being sick. That sort of situation can put a damper on a seven year old's mood. "How far is Techno's storage place?" He asks, maybe a bit impatient, maybe a bit worried. He wants all his boys in one place, in sight.

(Quietly, he *knows* he's already starting to lean in hard with the pure idea of being something of a father. Wilbur is not his son, but at this point, Phil is his dad, in every way that matters. In a zombie apocalypse, with death on their heels, chances can be short and quick. Phil will take this with both hands.

Even if he's not entirely sure how to be a dad.)

"It's next door." Tommy responds, sighing out with something upset. "He's got a lock on it and everything. There's so much *stuff* in there."

Phil snorts, stepping away from Wilbur, making his way around the couch to peer out into the street through the screen door on the balcony. He probably won't see Techno from here, but he would still like to try and keep a lookout.

"Like what?" Phil asks, purely to let Tommy talk.

"Band-aids. Drugs. He has so many cans, I could build a castle with just cans of beans from there." Tommy says, and Phil smiles, then falters.

Tommy keeps talking, but the noise seems to fade off, not reaching Phil's ears as he leans closer to the window, staring down into the street.

There's- someone. Stumbling across the road. There's people, more than one, an entire crowd-

Phil holds his breath and feels the world freeze for just a moment.

There's zombies in the street.

The hoard is in *here*, past the walls, past the empty city.

And Technoblade is out with them.

The second that thought registers, Phil moves, something *furious* tearing through him.

"Tommy, tell me where the storagehouse is." His tone seems to hold something sharp, because Tommy's mouth clicks shut from where he had been ranting, and he jerks his head up with wide eyes.

“Wha- Huh?” The kid’s voice comes out quiet, and Phil asks again, trying to be gentler.

“Point me in which direction it is. Where is it, specifically?”

“Next door.” Tommy points, and Phil looks out the window once again, taking note of which side it is. He moves off to the kitchen, Tommy stumbling to his feet. “I already told you- what’s going on?” He stays standing in the living room, hands held to his chest, a nervous glance towards Wil.

Phil’s movements are swift, automatic. He pulls on his shoes and finds a knife in the kitchen drawers, his mind telling him it’ll do. He can’t risk having a gun right now, not with Wilbur and Tommy so close. Besides, it would draw too much attention, if the hoard really has gotten through.

“Phil?” Tommy calls, Phil pushing a drawer shut. “Why is-?” There’s a pause, and although Phil wants to run out the door right now, he knows he can’t just leave Tommy without a single explanation- “PHIL!”

Tommy’s stumbling away from the window as Phil returns back, and he watches as the kid runs over to Wilbur, kneeling down beside him, seeming stricken at the fact he’s sleeping, too vulnerable.

He turns to Phil.

“There’s- the zombies got in!” Tommy yells, and Phil holds a finger over his mouth, Tommy pausing, then slapping a hand over his lips. He seems to shrink against the couch, head tilted up towards Wilbur, who stays still, stays asleep.

“It’s alright.” Phil reassures, glancing at Wilbur. Part of him wants to just stay right here, not even dare to leave his side, but fucking hell, he is *not* losing Techno again. “I’m going to go fetch Technoblade, okay?”

“Techno’s in the horde.” Tommy whispers, like he’s just realizing it with terror. “He- He didn’t take his sword- or, or a gun-”

“I’ll go get him.” Phil repeats, and Tommy looks up at him, a slight shake to his head. “I’ll be right back.”

“But-” Tommy opens his mouth, then closes it, looking at Wilbur again, like he’ll offer comfort. “Wilbur’s sick.” He says, and Phil’s heart aches. “He can’t- we can’t run, he’s-”

“There’s no need to.” Phil reassures, and he lifts his head, giving a sharp whistle. Where’s that dog?

Lo and behold, Floof comes with the call, and Phil watches as the animal comes running through the hall, looking around for Techno, and only seeing Phil. It gives a grumbled woof, but doesn’t head back. Instead, Floof walks over to Tommy, sitting beside him, knowing that the boy will give plenty of pats.

“*If* a zombie gets in, Floof can bite its head off for you, okay?” Phil offers, stepping back to the kitchen. He wants to stay, keep giving comforting words to Tommy, but panic is simmering through his veins, and he needs to make sure Techno is okay. He *needs* Techno to be okay. “I’m going to be right back, I’ll only be gone for a few minutes.”

Tommy runs his fingers through Floof’s fur like he’s trying to distract himself, and he looks up at Phil with a hesitant expression.

“You’re going to be just fine.” Phil repeats. He tries his hardest to make it sound true, confident. He seems to succeed, because the slightest bit of tension seems to leave Tommy’s shoulders.

“Promise?” Tommy blurts out, Phil halfway into the kitchen.

“ *Promise* .” Phil nods his head, and Tommy nods back.

With that, Phil runs, escaping out the door, a knife in his hand, and a deadly, determined energy settling onto him. The worry of Wil and Tommy’s safety leaves his mind, just for a moment, and he focuses solely on Techno, trying to think of the chances here.

Could the horde have snuck up on Techno while he was in the storagehouse? Would he still be able to fight them off long enough to survive?

Techno’s capable, but even then, Tommy had said it himself. He didn’t take a weapon. He’s down there with nothing but the supplies around him, trapped in an enclosed space with death out in the cold street.

The simple idea of that makes Phil slightly frantic. He steps out through the front doors, and the first zombie that goes at him gets a knife through the eye, right into its skull.

It falls to the ground with a dull thump, and Phil steps over it without sparing a second glance. A few more hands reach out to him, rotting and dirty, and he bats them away, pushes a zombie out of his path.

He doesn’t even need to kill them to head through, now that he thinks about it. If it was a normal survivor walking through, they would kill carefully, move with caution so as to not get bit.

Phil’s immune. He does not give a single fuck, so there is no hesitation as he goes ahead.

He digs his knife into a zombie’s throat, then slams it to the ground, moving forward and shoving another undead corpse out of his way. One of them lunges at him, trying to bite at his shoulder, and he grabs it by the face, holding it away and then letting the thing fall and crumple with its poor balance.

The storagehouse is wide open, the chains being unlocked. A few zombies are trying to head in, and Phil stabs one in the back of the head, pushing it forward, watching them all tumble onto the ground in a heap of decaying limbs.

He steps over them, and feels a cold, bony hand wrap around his ankle.

He yanks his foot away, and then slams it down into the zombie's head. It goes still with a crack against the concrete.

"Techno!" Phil calls, looking into the storagehouse, finding shelves upon shelves of items, food, water- "TECHNOBLADE!" Phil yells, angry, and it echoes through.

"Over here!" He hears Techno's voice, and there is instant relief upon not finding any sort of pain in his tone. There is the sound of a struggle, though, something slamming against something with a thud, and Phil moves.

He makes his way through the supplies stacked around, and turns the corner to find Techno stumbling back, a bloody mess of a zombie laid out on the ground. There's a bloody can of something, in Techno's hand. Phil can't tell what it is past the red that's sticking to the can.

Techno lifts his head to him with a shocked look. "Phil, you- wait, is that our kitchen knife?"

"Not anymore!" Phil cheers, and he tugs Techno towards him into a tight hug, curling a palm at the back of his head. Techno has to lean down a bit to properly rest his chin onto Phil's shoulder, but he doesn't complain. He hugs back, just for a second, then goes to pull away, holding onto Phil's arms.

"You should not be here." Techno says, and Phil narrows his eyes.

"There is a fucking *horde* in the street."

“Exactly!” Techno sputters out, distressed.

Phil squints even more. “I’m *immune* , mate.” And with that, he pushes Techno to the side, reaching out to a stumbling zombie that had been quietly approaching. He digs his knife into its eye, just like with the first one, and he yanks it out, letting go and watching it hit the ground, blood forming a puddle at his feet. He turns back to Techno, continuing. “ *You* don’t even have a weapon on you. I’m sure you’re very dangerous and capable of killing many zombies with a single can of beans, but that’s not ideal, in my opinion.”

Techno doesn’t respond, only staring at the dead zombie, a hint of a smile on his lips. He huffs.

“What?” Phil asks, Techno looking up.

“Uh- nostalgia, I guess.” Techno shrugs. There’s something of a grin in his expression, soft and happy, even with the fact there’s blood sticking to the bottoms of Phil’s shoes, blood staining his fingertips. He’s suddenly reminded of the earlier days of this apocalypse, Phil jumping forward to kill a zombie before Techno could even get grabbed. “Anyway,” He pushes the memories away. “-you need to get inside, you shouldn’t have even *gone* out here-” He moves forward, pushing at Phil to head towards the door.

“Oh, don’t start.” Phil mutters, walking forward, kicking a zombie out of the way and letting it crash to the ground. They move out of its range before it can even sit up. “Do you have Wil’s medicine?”

“Yeah, I got it.” Techno pats at his pocket. “And I mean it, Phil. Are Tommy and Wil alone in the apartment?”

“They’re safe.” Phil insists. He kicks another zombie out of the way. It lands into a pile of cans. “I doubt the horde is going to start climbing up the stairs anytime soon. Besides, it’s not like I’m going to leave you out here-”

“I don’t want you risking your life for me.” Techno cuts him off, and he says it in a way that’s so earnest, honest. Like he wants more than anything for Phil to just get it. “I could’ve-”

Phil almost wants to laugh out of fond exasperation.

He slams a fist against a zombie's face instead, feeling his knuckles ache as the zombie slams into a shelf. He turns to Techno.

“No.” He says simply, raising his knife out with a pointed look. Techno frowns. “I’m here now, we’re going back to the apartment, and we will talk about this later.”

“Are we actually going to talk about it, or are you just going to use the immune card to your advantage against all my arguments?” Techno deadpans.

Phil grins, all teeth. “Let’s get back to Tommy, yeah? I promised him I’d be quick.”

Chapter End Notes

wow i'm sleepy

kinda like sleepybois. sleepybois inc.

haha. anyway. hope you enjoyed, random reminder that I'm a writer who isn't fond of character death!! Haha, oh, thought that would be a neat fact for yall to know. (FAMILY FLUFF FAMILY FLUFF FAMILY FLUFF-)

okay bye bye

Cuddles are mandatory

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tommy stares at Wilbur's sleeping face. He watches as his brother's chest rises and falls, lungs filling with air, before losing it all in a quiet sigh.

At first glance, you could assume he's just sleeping. Just taking a peaceful nap, right here on the couch, nothing wrong to be seen. But Tommy knows better.

There's a little furrow in Wil's brow, something that only ever shows when he's particularly stressed or frustrated. His face is a little more red than usual, and while he is breathing steadily, there is a barely there wheeze that comes with it. Like the air in this room just isn't enough.

If Tommy wasn't so scared of seeing those zombies out on the street, he would open a window.

Instead, he stays kneeling at Wilbur's side, hands resting on his sleeve, watching Wilbur sleep fitfully, a fever on his skin.

The sight scares him.

(How many times has Tommy seen this before? It always starts like this, he knows it. It's a fever, at the start. A fever that makes the person sleep and sleep until they can't breathe, can't wake up, can't move. Then they die.

And then they come back.)

Floof sits at his side, the dog's fur brushing at Tommy's pajama pants, but somehow the company doesn't do much to shut down the kid's fears. He tries to think of what Phil said, of what Techno told him.

He's not bit. That's what they said. Wilbur's not bit, it's just a fever. So they went to get medicine, and that'll fix it. That'll make it better.

But Tommy can't quite believe that.

He reaches a hand out to Wilbur's head, and rests a palm onto his forehead, feeling it warm against his skin. It's too warm. Tommy presses against Wil's skull, trying to steal all the warmth so it won't overwhelm him, but his hand is only so cool.

He needs something more.

Getting up from the ground, Tommy moves over to the kitchen, keeping his eyes firmly away from the screen door, the perfect view to the shuffling bodies out in the street.

(They won't get in. Phil promised. He *promised*.)

He searches for a towel in the kitchen cabinets, Floof trotting into the kitchen not long after Tommy. The dog sits at the doorway, watching Tommy look around, then find a towel. Tommy folds the fabric in his palms, and with a water bottle that had been left on the counter, he wets it over the sink and wrings it out.

Now that leaves him with a damp towel, perfect for cooling someone down. Tommy gives a small smile, and makes a beeline back to Wil, quickly heading over to place the towel over his head as carefully as possible. Wilbur mutters a bit with the added cloth, but he doesn't wake.

There. Better.

Tommy's chest still feels kinda heavy.

He sits back down at Wilbur's side, and Floof sits back beside Tommy. The zombies continue to walk around outside, and the silence in the room drags on, leaving only Wilbur's quiet wheezes.

"Wilby." Tommy whispers, even though he knows Wil won't respond. He probably won't even hear. "Wil?" Even so, Tommy can't help but try. He wants Wilbur to miraculously open his eyes, take Tommy into his arms and reassure that he feels just fine. He's not sick, he's not infected, and they're all going to be okay, here in Techno's base.

It's all going to be okay.

"Wil." Tommy repeats, his throat feeling tight. He presses a hand at Wil's cheek, and it's still too warm. Wilbur doesn't stir from his sleep, he just stays still, stays breathing, and Tommy needs- he *needs* to know Wilbur isn't bit.

He stands up, tugging at Wilbur's blankets, grabbing at his arms and trying to push up his sleeves. The fabric is stubborn though, and as Tommy struggles with rolling up Wil's sleeves, the pressure in his chest grows and grows until it's crushing.

"Wilbur." Tommy says, squeezing at Wil's wrist. Wilbur sleeps on, too warm. All of his skin is too warm, and that's the first sign of being turned. You turn hot like an oven, like fire. You get too warm, and then you get sick, and you sleep, and sleep, and sleep forever until you don't wake up. "Wil!"

Tommy checks the other arm. Checks Wilbur's neck. Checks his temperature again, and nothing has changed. Wil breathes, and sleeps, and Tommy doesn't know, he doesn't *know* if it's just a fever, or a zombie bite.

He doesn't know.

(But Techno said it was just a fever, he's not infected. And Techno knows what a zombie fever would look like, right? Surely?)

The blankets stay half-hanging off of Wilbur as Tommy falls back at his brother's side, and a sob bubbles out from his lips, panic crawling up his spine and digging into his shoulder, so cold and so heavy that Tommy doesn't know what to do.

Fuck, he doesn't know what to *do*.

"Wil, wake up!" Tommy cries, his chest heaving with a sob. "Wake up!" He knows he's resting, he knows Wilbur is sleeping, but what if he's not? What if he's- he's bit, and he's dying, and Tommy has to wake him up! Tommy has to-

"Wilb-" Tommy presses his face into the couch cushions, sniffing and trying to breathe, but the air isn't good, and maybe he's sick now too. Maybe he's also bit. Maybe-

Floof sits up and puts his wet snout right into Tommy's face.

Tommy shrieks with the sudden dog up against his nose, and he jolts back away from the couch, hot tears still streaming down his face, but forgotten for just a moment as Floof tries to poke into his face again.

"Floof." Tommy says, but it comes out half-broken, a shake of his shoulders as he cries again, and the dog just sits right in front of Tommy, sniffing at his shirt. Tommy reaches forward and grabs the dog in a hug, and Floof doesn't seem to mind, instead just deciding to focus all its attention on licking the back of Tommy's neck.

Tommy doesn't protest. It's gross, sure, but it kinda helps. He hugs Floof and hides his tears away into white fur, and the dog just tries to lick at his hair, his ear, his face. It's hard to hug a dog when the dog just like to try eating you.

“I’m not a zombie, Floof.” Tommy complains, pushing the dog’s snout away as the dog slobber begins to become a bit much.

Tommy suddenly pauses. He’s got an idea.

“Floof! Come here, come here-” Tommy sits up, grabbing at the dog, and using all his strength to pick him up, wrapping his little arms around the dogs middle and raising him towards Wilbur on the couch. “Be- Be a doctor, Floof! Tell me. Is he a zombie?”

Floof hates zombies, right? He knows zombies. So, if Wilbur’s infected, then Floof will bark and not like him.

Yes. Yes, that’s right.

“Go, Floof! Look at him!” Tommy insists, raising the dog up, and Floof sniffs at Wilbur’s sleeve for a moment, then just licks at his hand. Wilbur is none the wiser about it.

Even with the flimsy way of checking, Tommy feels a slight bit of relief at the dog's confirmation. He grins with a shaky laugh, and then puts the dog down, sighing. “Okay. That means not a zombie, I think. Right? Yeah.”

Floof huffs. Then he sits beside the couch, curled up on the ground.

Tommy nods. He settles back at Wilbur’s side, and goes to pet Floof's fur to pass the time.

Wilbur keeps sleeping, a damp towel on his head and his blankets a bit thrown off. Tommy keeps watch closely, waiting for Techno and Phil to come back.

When they come back, they’ll know what to do.

Surely.

“Back up.”

“Phil-”

“I said *back up*, Technoblade, or I swear to fucking god-” Phil hisses, holding a zombie by the literal throat. Its rotten hands are grabbing at Phil’s shirt, trying to tear him apart, but Phil is paying it quite literally no attention, rather instead looking back at Techno to scold him.

“Can you put the zombie down.” Technoblade huffs, using the knife in hand to take down another approaching body, watching the thing fall with a cut off groan. Blood soaks into the floor. Techno only sighs at the sight. He’s going to have to clean all of this.

He looks down the road, where zombies are insistently trying to make their way towards Phil and Techno, wanting to kill them. Only problem is, Phil is immune, and Techno is so well-versed in killing things that he might as well just be taking a normal walk in his territory.

It might’ve been more difficult without the knife Phil had handed over, but Techno still would’ve managed just fine with the bloody can of beans, to be honest. He’s lived in this apocalypse on his own for quite a while, killing zombies with literally whatever he had on hand was something he used to do as a hobby.

His mind thinks back to the earlier days of starting his base. He remembers the creative ways he had thought up of getting rid of the undead on his roads. That had been a fun time.

This is a little less fun. More tedious than anything. Techno wants to stab something.

The zombie coming at him will do perfectly.

As another body hits the ground with a knife having stabbed right through it's skull, Phil takes the zombie he had been holding hostage and uses it as a sort of undead human shield, pushing at all the zombies in his way and watching them stumble and fall back onto the concrete. Techno quickly follows at Phil's heels, marveling a bit at just how recklessly Phil handles all the zombies.

The man is quite literally just- grabbing them with his hands. Yanking them by their shirts, by their throats, pushing them to the side like they're only an annoyance he can't deal with at the moment.

And here Techno thought *he* was well skilled in the apocalypse. He does suppose immunity adds a bit of an advantage.

"If any of that blood is yours, we're going to be having words, Phil." Techno warns, quickly making his way after Phil as the man forces his way through the horde, making a clear path for Techno. He honestly can't tell if any of that blood belongs to Phil. He knows that he himself isn't faring any better either. They're both a mess, with zombie remains being stained into their clothes.

Techno might just end up throwing away this shirt rather than washing it. With all the zombies in the road, and Wilbur still being sick up in the apartment, he thinks that's a good reason to have a rest day. He deserves it. They all deserve it.

That and Phil is honestly going to need time to just recover from mowing through a crowd of zombies. (Or at least he would hope the man needs time to recover. Surely he doesn't do this often enough for it to be a habit. Oh god, what has happened to this man's self-preservation? Techno has his work cut out for him.)

"Mate, I've only gotten bit once." Phil says, like it's not a concern, but frankly just those words make Techno's entire head ring in alarm. "I barely even feel it." He shoves back a few zombies, watching them all stumble and fall over themselves on the ground, and he then waves a bloody arm up into the air. Techno doesn't even know where he got bit. He can't see past the bloodstains.

“That’s not comforting.” Techno deadpans, ducking away from an outstretched zombie arm.

“Come here, come here.” Phil quickly calls, holding a hand out, and he pulls Techno by the wrist, taking them more forward, and dodging out of the way of a few zombies.

Thankfully, it really doesn’t take that much time to get through the hoard in the street. The real problem had been getting out of the storagehouse, because finding a path through a bunch of zombies blocking the only entrance was a tedious thing, for sure, and it was a matter of picking off all the zombies faster than they could stumble inside.

There’s too many bodies in Techno’s storage house. He’s going to need to clear them out.

Uhhgg.

“Alright, final push.” Phil hums, and it’s true, the doors are right in sight, all they’ve got to do is get inside and run out of the zombie’s view. Once they’re hidden inside the apartment, the undead will forget they’re even there, and they’ll go on their way, shuffling around and making a mess of Techno’s territory.

Techno uses the knife in hand and stabs at a new zombie grabbing onto his sleeve, pushing the thing away with it having a new hole in its head. It stumbles, then falls, and then dies for a second time on the ground, Techno quickly moving forward as Phil kicks a zombie out of his way.

“Go, go!” Phil grabs Techno, and then pushes him ahead, towards the doors. A zombie groans right beside Techno’s ear, rotten and horrible, and before Techno can even jab the edge of his knife into its eye, Phil’s grabbing it by the face, slamming it backwards and watching it cause a domino effect of zombies just toppling over, groaning and shrieking and making all the undead noises.

Techno pulls open the doors, Phil pushing him again to get him inside, and then the door shut, and they’re in the clear. They keep moving, quickly running over to the stairs, and only after they shut the stairwell door behind them is when Techno stops to take a breather.

“Fuck!” Phil yells, his voice echoing out into the stairwell. He leans over with a huff, then stands up straight with a grin. “That went alright.” He says, as if there is not blood dripping off one of his hands right now. Techno *still* can’t tell if that’s his, or a zombie’s.

“Could’ve gone better.” Techno shrugs, catching his breath and leaning back against the wall. He drops the knife down on the floor and decides to leave it there for the time being. He has other knives. This one is dirty, anyhow. “I’d rate it a 2/10. Wish I had my sword.”

Phil makes a questioning noise in the back of his throat. “You have a sword?”

Oh. Right. Techno hasn’t even shown Phil that. “Yeah.”

Phil just snorts, reaching forward and grabbing lightly at Techno’s elbow. “Of course you do.” He checks over Technoblade’s arms, glancing over his shoulders for any rips in fabric, any bloodstains that seem fresh. “You’re alright?”

“Hm.” Techno nods, pushing back against the wall and looking himself over too. He feels alright. There’s an edge of adrenaline on his skin, but it’s fading off pretty quickly, and there’s no stinging sensation of a bite or a scratch anywhere on his skin. He would notice if he was bit too, because while he had indeed been fighting zombies, it wasn’t to the point where there’s so much blood staining his shirt that he can’t tell if some of it is his.

Like Phil.

“Are *you* alright?” Techno asks, giving a wary look as Phil checks over Techno’s back, trying to spot any injury of any sort. Phil just gives a small snort, stepping back with his hands raised into the air, like he’s admitting surrender.

“Never better.” He says, and then he rolls up his arm, and shows off a new zombie bite right on the edge of some of his bandages. “Well, except for this one. But it’s just one-”

“I *just* wrapped that arm, Phil.” Techno huffs, trying to force a joking tone so he doesn’t start panicking. Part of him is already panicking over how nonchalant they’re both taking this. Phil is literally bit. He’s got multiple bite marks just dug into his skin, and here he is, poking at one of them like it’s just a small inconvenient cut. He kinda feels the urge to giggle a bit, just out of sheer disbelief. “Alright. Whatever, I’ll- I’ll rewrap it after you take a bath.”

“That would be nice.” Phil hums, and they quickly head on up towards the stairs, all the way to the apartment where Wilbur and Tommy are waiting.

Techno checks on the bottle of medicine he’s got in his pocket, and he gives a sigh of relief, glad that at the very least, they’ve got what they were looking for. Granted, fighting against an entire zombie horde for it wasn’t part of the plan, but hey, y’know, medicine has been acquired, Techno isn’t dead, good enough for him. He’d like it if Phil wasn’t currently bleeding out of his arm, but what can you do.

They walk down the familiar hallway to home, and Techno pushes open the door without a knock, wanting only to just be inside and out of the danger already.

“We’re back!” Phil calls out behind Techno, closing the door as Techno walks into the kitchen, and Techno falters at hearing the sound of a snuffle.

“Techno?” Tommy asks, and his voice is shaky, as if he’s in pain.

Techno’s entire mind goes into brother mode, and he blinks, and he’s in the living room, having moved over there on sheer autopilot. He spots Tommy sitting by the couch, Wilbur being where they had left him. He looks over them both for any injuries, for blood or anything of the sort, but there’s nothing to be found. Everything seems okay.

Save for the tears on Tommy’s face.

Everything is no longer okay.

“Technoblade!” Tommy calls, and he stumbles over his feet, running away from Wil’s side to head towards Techno, arms stretched out. Techno kneels down and is met with an armful of Tommy, the kid nearly knocking him backwards onto the ground.

“Hey, hey-” Techno tries to talk, but Tommy’s beating him to the punch, and he starts to ramble on with no end in sight.

“I saw the zombies in the road when you had gone out, I didn’t- Phil said he was going to go get you, but I didn’t know- You didn’t even take a fucking gun! Or your sword! And Phil went without a sword too, he just took a knife, and Wilbur stayed here, but he’s too warm! I-I got a towel and I put on it on his head, but he won’t wake up, and I didn’t know-”

“Tommy, mate.” Phil cuts in, Techno standing up slowly with Tommy being held in his arms. Tommy only cries, shoving his face into Techno’s shoulder, his hands digging into Techno’s shirt. Phil continues to speak to him from behind Techno’s back. “Hey, hey. Breathe. It’s okay.”

“Wilbur won’t wake up!” Tommy sobs, and Phil only gives a sympathetic noise. “I didn’t- He’s not breathing right!”

“Is he?” Techno asks, and he glances back at Phil to ask him to check. Phil quickly moves away from Techno, heading over to kneel down beside Wilbur instead.

Wilbur sleeps on, and Phil leans in and listens close to quiet wheezing, his breaths being slow and steady. For a moment, they resemble the way an infected fever would set in, and Phil touches Wil’s face, feeling it warm at his fingertips. A smear of blood sticks to his cheek when he pulls away.

“Wil?” Phil asks, and Wilbur doesn’t respond at first. Tommy’s crying fails to calm down, only growing worse now that he’s in Techno’s arms, free to sob with safety around him. “Hey, Wilbur.”

Wil’s face shifts a bit, and Phil reaches out with a hand to shake at Wilbur’s arm, just a bit. Wilbur’s expression scrunches up with a frown, and he opens his eyes with the noise of Tommy’s crying in the background.

Phil stays hovering over him, keeping his voice low. “Hey, mate.”

“Wha-” Wilbur breathes out, and his breath hitches with realizing who exactly is crying in the background, Techno’s voice quietly giving reassurance. His eyes go a little wide. “Toms?”

“He’s alright.” Phil promises. “How are you feeling?”

“Dad?” Wilbur only asks, and god, isn’t that a punch in the gut. Phil struggles to not go crying right with the seven year old behind him. “Dad, where’s Tommy?”

“Techno’s got him. It’s okay.” Phil clears his throat. “You think you can stay up for a second? We’ve got medicine, and I think Tommy should see you awake.”

“I don’t...?” Wilbur mutters, but he nods, seeming to understand. Phil turns around, standing on his feet and heading towards Techno, who’s pacing by the doorway of the kitchen, Tommy still quietly crying in his arms.

“Wilbur’s awake. You got that medicine? I’ll pour some out while you and Tommy talk with him for a bit.”

Tommy’s head lifts up with wide eyes at hearing that, and Techno nods, quickly handing over the bottle to Phil. Phil goes on into the kitchen to wash his hands, searching around for water and soap.

“Alright.” Techno murmurs, heading over to Wil, and Tommy struggling in Techno’s grip to be let down so he can run over to Wilbur’s side.

Wilbur stares at them with a dazed sort of look as they come over, but he gives only a fond smile as Tommy is set down on the ground, his hands reaching out for a hug. Wil reaches a

hand out too, and Tommy grabs it, and uses it as leverage as he climbs up on the couch, right over Wilbur.

“Wil! Tommy calls, and then he promptly shoves his face into Wilbur’s shirt, deciding to rest right there, on top of Wilbur. Wil doesn’t seem to mind all that much. He just rests a hand onto Tommy’s curls with a light laugh.

“Hello t’you too.” He groans a little with the added weight on his ribs.

“Phil and Techno got medicine.” Tommy only says, lifting his head up. “You’ll be okay. Yeah. You’re going to be okay. Just don’t throw up again.”

“Mhm. Got it.” Wil nods, and Tommy hums, trying to hug Wilbur tighter.

Wil tilts his head over to Techno at his side. His gaze drags down at the sight of blood splattered across his face, his clothes, his hair practically falling out of its braid.

“You look like shit.” Wilbur mutters. Techno only snorts.

“You should see dad.” Techno responds, but with the way Wilbur’s face just goes confused, he doesn’t think he catches onto the joke. He just seems too out of it to really grasp what he said earlier to Phil.

Something clatters in the kitchen as soon as Techno finishes his sentence. “Fuck!” Phil yells. “I’m okay!” He adds right after, and Techno makes a mental note to maybe not make that joke with Phil in range. Might just add emotional weight, and ohhh, Techno’s had a day. He’s not having this thought process right now.

“Did Floof keep you company while we were gone?” Techno asks, leaning forward to Tommy, who lifts his head with a nod.

“Yeah.” He hums, and Wilbur huffs, laying his head backwards against the couch. “Wil!”

Wilbur opens his eyes. “I’m up!”

Tommy doesn’t seem convinced. He shifts around where he is, then kicks at the blankets at his feet, still hanging off Wilbur’s ankles. He then seems to make a grand decision, and looks at Techno with a determined little glint in his eyes.

“I don’t like this couch.” He declares. “We’re moving to the floor.”

“Wouldn’t the bed be better?” Techno asks.

“I already moved all the blankets off the bed.” Tommy points out, and yeah, sure enough, there is indeed a pile of blankets and pillows just put to the side, on the ground. “We’re sleeping here.” He says, and that is law. Can’t argue with the seven year old.

Techno just sighs. “Okay, well. I need to change, first.” He’s still got zombie guts all stained into his clothes. “And you’d have to rearrange all the blankets…”

“I can do that!” Tommy insists, and he practically elbows Wilbur in climbing off him, Wilbur giving a grunt of pain. “Move, move.” He pushes Techno away, seeming now absolutely set on setting down blankets to make the best sleeping spot ever.

“Alright.” Techno just goes with it, standing to his feet and moving to the side as Phil comes back from the kitchen with a small cup of medicine in his hand.

“What’re we doing here?” Phil asks, giving a noise of curiosity as Tommy starts to roll out the blankets on the rug, Wilbur watching him with a bleary eyed look. He seems moments from just kinda passing back out, to be honest. Techno pities him. He doesn’t look all that

aware, but he does just look overwhelmingly *fond* at seeing Tommy move around, focused with the blankets in hand.

“Tommy says we’re sleeping on the ground now.” Techno hums.

“Don’t we have a bed?”

“I already moved all the blankets!” Tommy insists, and he throws down another layer of blankets, adjusting it properly again. He looks at his rapidly dwindling pile. “I need more blankets.” He says, looking at Techno.

Techno sighs. “Sure.” He heads over to his bedroom to do just that. “Phil, I’m going to start up a bath for you, too.”

Phil hums. “Sure, mate.” He watches Techno walk into the dimly lit hall, and then carefully moves around Tommy’s hard work, sitting beside Wilbur in where he’s trying to push himself into a proper sitting position.

“Everything fuckin’ aches.” Wilbur complains, Phil rubbing at his shoulder and holding up the medicine to him. “How were- How long did you guys go?”

“Just for a few minutes. It’s alright.” Phil reassures, and Wilbur takes the medicine, although not without making a face at it. He scrunches his nose with judgment, and then looks over at Phil, only now seeming to notice the bloodstains all over his clothes. He blinks, wrapping his arms around himself.

“You’re hurt?” Wil asks, something genuinely worried woven into his expression. “When did-?”

“Oh, don’t worry about it.” Phil waves a hand. “Just uh- a few stray zombies.” More like a hundred. But Wilbur doesn’t need to know about the hoard stumbling out in the street, underneath the night sky. “We’re alright.”

“Wil!” Tommy calls. Wilbur looks over. He then gets hit in the face with a blanket.

“Tommy!” Phil fails at holding back a laugh, and Tommy laughs too.

“He’s cold!” Tommy defends himself, and Wilbur tugs the blanket off his head, huffing out with a narrowed playful glare at Tommy. Tommy only grins back. “Look, see!”

Phil does look, and he does note that Wilbur’s sorta curled in on himself, hands digging into the blanket on his lap. “You’re shivering.” He says, and Wilbur frowns.

“And my head hurts.” He adds, closing his eyes like he’s debating just sleeping right there.

“Wilbur!” Tommy calls. Wilbur opens his eyes.

“Up.” He mutters, leaning forward with a groan.

Techno returns then, with cleaner clothes on, and an armful of blankets that he throws towards Tommy’s direction, Tommy shrieking as he thinks it’s going to hit him, only to find out it just lands right before him.

“Phil, I left some clean clothes for you in the bathroom.” Techno says, and Phil rises to his feet, giving a nod.

“Alright. I already gave Wil medicine. I think some sleep would do him some good right now.”

“And blankets.” Tommy mutters, quickly making work of what Techno’s provided to him.

Phil smiles. “Watch over them for a bit, I’ll be right back.”

“Hm.” Techno nods, and he watches Phil head off, taking a candle on the way to light up his path. He looks towards Tommy, who finishes up his make-shift bed on the ground, leaning back on his knees and seeming rather satisfied with himself.

“Okay, okay.” Tommy nods to himself. He looks up at Wilbur. “Wil! Come lay down.”

Wilbur stares at Tommy for a moment, and then listens, dragging himself off the couch with what looks to be all his effort, and then practically collapsing into the blankets with a grunt. Tommy immediately grabs at him, laying on top of him for a moment, before actually shifting around to lay beside him.

“Could I get some water?” Wil asks at Techno and Techno complies, heading over to the kitchen to do just that.

Tommy pokes and prods Wilbur into laying down properly on their pile of blankets, and once he deems Wilbur in the right spot, he lays right beside him, wriggling his way into his brother’s arms and giving a content sigh.

Only, Wilbur just gives a hum, with another shiver running down his back. The towel on his head has fallen off at this point, and he still feels rather warm, but he won’t stop shivering. Like the air is just freezing him up, right down to the bone.

Tommy blinks, and his heart squeezes in concern. He grabs a stray blanket and pulls it over them both, but it doesn’t really help. The blanket isn’t warm.

But Tommy is! There’s the solution. Tommy’s got it fixed. He can just- keep Wilbur from freezing.

But he’s not enough. He’s hugging Wilbur with his arms around his brother’s waist, but he still keeps shaking.

Hmm. This requires a better solution.

And at the moment, Techno returns, lo and behold, unaware he's just become victim to Tommy's demands.

"Techno!" Tommy sits up, Wilbur practically having drifted off to sleep already now. Techno stops in his tracks, and spots Wilbur asleep through the candle light, and puts the cup of water to the side.

"Yeah?" He asks, putting the cup down, and then stumbling as Tommy moves forward to nab him by the hand, tugging him forward.

"Come here, come here." Tommy says, with such an air of importance that Techno can't help but just listen with vague intrigue. "Right- Hmm. No, right here. Sit here." He points right behind Wilbur.

"...okay..." Techno hesitantly sits, and then lays down at Tommy's insistence. He rests his hands on his stomach, staring up into the ceiling with a sigh. The joys of children.

"Okay! Alright, hmm." Tommy steps over Wilbur's sleeping body, sitting down at his other side. He looks at Wilbur, tugging at the blanket over his legs, and then reaches at Techno's arm. "Give me this."

"That's my arm."

"No, the other one!"

"That's- Okay, have my other arm, then." Techno holds up his hand, and Tommy takes it by the wrist, and drapes it over Wil's torso, pulling at Techno and forcing him to give a sorta half-hug to Wilbur. "Tommy-"

“Shhh!” Tommy adjusts Techno’s arm, and then nods. Then he lifts Techno’s arm again, and huddles against Wilbur’s chest, putting Techno’s arm back down. He grabs at the blankets and yanks them up to the best of his efforts, and then goes still. “Okay. Perfect.”

Techno stays still, and then feels a slight urge to just laugh from the absolute ridiculousness of his night. Phil’s been bit several times and is just currently washing the blood off without a problem. Wilbur is sick and kinda out of it. Tommy’s currently forcing him into what just seems like cuddling.

He can’t say he’s surprised. At this point, he kinda just oughta roll with the punches.

“Tommy.” Techno calls, and Tommy shushes him again. “I really don’t think Wil’s going to be all that enthusiastic about me hugging him.”

“He’s cold.” Tommy says, like that explains it all. “You have to keep him not cold.”

“He’s burning up.”

“Keep him not cold, Techno.” Tommy demands with a huff, and Techno gives up. He accepts his fate and rests his head down, and Tommy is happy with that.

A few minutes later, Phil returns with cleaner clothes and bloodstains gone, and he walks into the dimly lit living room to the sight of the three of them sleeping on the ground, huddled closed together as if the temperature has just gotten too cold.

The sight almost kills his undead heart. Almost.

EDIT: omg you sweet little fools yes the caw caw is undead, he's IMMUNE. HE'S LITERALLY A ZOMBIE DUDE. JUST LIKE. NOT ALL THE WAY. "UNDEAD HEART???" IS HE GONNA DIE-" GUYS HE'S PARTLY TURNED. PLS. YOU'RE ALL SO SILLY.

wait did

did none of you like realize this. bro. BRO. PHIL'S PARTIALLY DEAD BC OF THE VIRUS. GUYS PLEASEEEEE.

I THOUGHT I WENT OVER THIS DIDN'T I DROP HINTS

eh oh well anyway thanks for reading!! <3 <3

sickbur??? More like a plot device to make family dynamics!!!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Wilbur is leaning against a cold, dirty counter.

“It’s just a fever.” Someone is pleading, an old woman with scars across her knuckles and a gun tucked underneath her shirt. She’s got a warm smile, Wilbur knows it, but it’s nowhere to be seen as of now. *“He just got sick, that’s all-”*

“That’s a fever?” Someone else says back, their tone sharp and panicked.

Somehow, it is something so familiar to Wil. The noise of arguing rising higher and higher until they might as all just be screaming to the stars above, that is familiar.

“He hasn’t moved in the past twenty hours! And he’s not getting any better!”

“He will! You have to give it time!”

“Time is the exact thing that won’t fucking help!”

This is something Wilbur remembers. Something he’s lived through before and thrown into the past.

The counter is too cold against his fingertips as he leans back, and he stares at the company in the kitchen, hearing them argue back and forth, all their faces seeming a little blurry in his vision. He doesn’t question it. He just stares and opens his mouth, and all at once, the voices

grow louder. As if just his mere attempt at an intervention has added an entire container of gasoline to the fire.

His voice won't do shit here. So he moves away, no longer interested in their shouting.

He leaves the kitchen with slow steps, the rundown apartment filled with a suffocating sort of silence. He steps into a dimly lit up living room, the windows cracked and broken, and the rug dirty with stains. There is a woman crying on the couch, her hands held to her face, her shoulders shaking with sobs.

She is the only one there. And Wilbur feels his heart drop with horror at the fact of it.

"Where's Tommy?" Wilbur hears himself ask. His words feel muddled, like cotton being pulled out from his mouth. He isn't speaking loud enough, he won't be heard.

The crying lady doesn't stop. She only curls in on herself, sobbing and sobbing until she's nearly shrieking with it.

"Where's my brother?" Wilbur's voice echoes out through the room, louder now. More effective, more panicked. *"Where's my little brother?!"* And Wil is moving again, his feet taking him down the hall, away from the light. He walks right into the dark, into a small room with no candles to be seen.

It's cold.

And Tommy is there.

Standing beside a bed with a rotting corpse lying in the middle.

It's only a body, but then it's not, because it's coming back with unseeing eyes and an undead groan, and there are filthy, decaying hands reaching out to Wilbur's brother, his little baby

brother.

And Tommy just stands there. Watching it.

“TOMMY!” His scream is pulled out from his throat with a burning sort of terror, something that makes the entire room spin. He moves forward and the arguing from the kitchen becomes so loud that it’s coming into the room, flowing into his head, drowning his ears in nothing but raised voices and stubborn swearing. Wilbur is screaming, reaching out, and he can’t even hear himself past all the voices, all the crying swirling around his head.

“TOMMY, GET AWAY FROM IT-!”

Tommy is taken into his arms, and Wilbur pulls him away, lifting him up off the ground. He turns his back on the monster behind him, and finds himself in the middle of the street.

The buildings are burning. And it’s all too warm.

And Wilbur’s arms are empty.

“ Tommy!” Wil is calling, his feet moving again. He hears gunshots echo down the road, screaming ringing out into the night. The fire around him is swallowing up every single bit of shelter, and Wil hopes to god that Tommy is not in any of them.

The air smells of rotting skin, ash, and gasoline. Wilbur hears the hoard coming in, their shuffling feet and shrieking groans, but he doesn’t see them. The road is empty with fire roaring all around, but the noise says so much more.

Wilbur keeps moving. He stumbles, the place melting down around him, and he calls out into the dark, over and over and over.

And he finds Tommy again. There, down at the end of the road. Standing still, standing alone.

“*Tommy!*” Wilbur runs towards him, and feels the fire reach at his skin, trying to tear him apart, burn him to nothing but bones. “*Tommy, come here!*” He screams, hands held out, the air too hot, too suffocating, fuck, he can’t breath-

If he can’t breathe, then how is Tommy?

“ *Toms-?* ” Wilbur’s palms finally land on Tommy’s shoulders, the little boy facing away from him, away from the fire. Wil pulls him to turn around, wanting to see if he is alright, and he comes face to face with whitened undead eyes.

Rotten skin and a bloodied face, but it is his brother’s face all the same, and Wilbur screams so loudly that it makes his own ears ring. There is a zombie- his Tommy- reaching at his neck, but Wil still pulls the monster closer, because that is his brother, that is his *brother, he’s dead, he’s dead, Wil failed, he’s dead, he’s-*

“ *TOMMY!* ” Wilbur cries, and it’s too hot, the fire is going to burn them both. He can’t breath, can’t see, there’s hands pulling at his collar, at him-

“Wilbur!” Tommy cries back, and Wil opens his eyes. “Wil, Wil, wake up!”

Tommy is crying. Wilbur is in the same state, judging by the wetness on his cheeks, but that isn’t important, because Tommy is *crying*, right over him. And there is no blood on his face, no lack of color in those eyes. There isn’t even a speck of dirt.

“Tom-” Wil tries to speak, gasping in a breath, and Tommy falls right on top of him, sobbing out in a panic. “Tommy.” He wraps his arms over the kid and holds him so tightly that it might just hurt. He shakes with fear, and curls himself around his brother, as if shielding him away from anything around them. “Tommy, Tommy-” He keeps saying, barely even breathing, only choking out that same name.

“You were- You were having a nightmare.” Tommy sniffs, digging his hands into Wilbur’s shirt. “It was just a nightmare! It was- you’re okay!” He says it so desperately, like he’s trying to convince himself of it too. “You’re okay, you’re okay!”

“Are *you* okay?” Wilbur asks, needing to know. He can’t let go of Tommy, so he just asks, hoping for an answer. “Are you okay- are you hurt?!”

“No!” Tommy shakes his head, but Wilbur doesn’t feel reassured. “No, no, I was just- you and Techno were just sleeping, and me and Phil were making breakfast-”

Phil.

Wilbur opens his eyes, lifting his head just barely from Tommy’s curls, and only then does he realize the company beside him.

Phil is kneeling right in front of him, eyes wide and shoulders tense, a look that Wilbur is familiar with. It’s a look that means he’s about to go reaching for a gun in the next minute, or end up pushing Wilbur into a hiding spot. Techno’s sitting next to him, leaning onto his palms as if he threw himself back just a moment before. Maybe he did, with Tommy running to Wilbur. Wilbur wouldn’t be surprised if Tommy shoved Techno to the side to get to Wilbur.

They’re both looking at him with something like concern etched into their expressions. Well, Techno is with slight concern. Phil just looks like a frantic sort of worry, like he’s been knocked right into survival mode.

Wilbur supposes that’s on him. He has no doubt that his screaming would make Phil go on edge within a heartbeat.

Somehow, that passing thought feels too heavy. He looks away, resting his head back down onto Tommy’s.

“-and you started screaming so I came over here-!” Tommy is still talking. “And Techno was trying to wake you up, you- you were having a nightmare, like from before-”

“Yeah.” Wilbur croaks out, and fuck, his throat burns. He blinks tears out of his eyes, and past the thrumming of his heartbeat still ringing in his ears, and the terror still simmering on his skin, he feels like absolute shit. His head pounds with pain, so he squeezes his eyes shut and holds Tommy close again, trying to catch his breath. “I’m okay.”

“You were screaming.” Tommy whispers, like Phil and Techno shouldn’t hear.

“Yeah, it’s just- It was just a nightmare.” The words hold a waver, but it’s at least a level calmer than how he woke up. “I was only having a nightmare.”

“You’re crying.” Tommy says, lifting his head up to Wil. Wilbur looks down at him, and gives a breathless laugh.

“You’re crying too.”

“Because you fucking scared me!” Tommy yells, and he hits Wilbur in the shoulder. Wilbur smiles, even with the attack upon his arm.

“I’m sorry.” Wil apologizes, taking in a deep breath to calm himself. It’s not quite enough, but it’s something. He kisses Tommy on the forehead, and that’s more effective for his beating heart than any deep breaths could be. Tommy scrunches his face up with it, making a frown. “Sorry.” Wil apologizes once more.

Tommy hits him again. “You were supposed to be resting!” He scolds, like Wilbur should just refrain from nightmares for the time being. “I was going to wake you up for breakfast.”

Wilbur smiles. “Yeah?”

“Yeah. Me and Phil were cooking.”

Wilbur lifts his gaze up again at that, and he rests his chin on Tommy’s head, looking at Phil with a tired, fond huff. “Were you?” He asks softly, and suddenly, it is as if every ounce of energy has been sapped away, all the panic soothed by Tommy in his arms and Phil being in sight.

His heartbeat calms down, just a bit, but the headache behind his temples has never been more present. He makes a miserable frown in Phil’s direction, slumping forward, and Phil looks sympathetically in return.

“We were trying to make some pancakes.” Phil scoots forward, seeming to take Wilbur’s attention on him as a cue to come in. “Hey, mate.”

“Hi.”

“You good?”

Wilbur thinks upon it for a second, taking in the way all his limbs have turned into useless weight. Everything is too warm, too stuffy, and it’s not from a fire that’s long since been burnt out.

“I think I’m sick.” He says slowly, the words feeling heavy on his tongue.

Techno snorts. “Ya think.” Phil gives an endearing grin his way, before turning back to Wil.

Wilbur only narrows his eyes at Techno in an attempt of a glare. Something in the back of his mind tells him to step carefully and be polite, but it’s all fuzzy past the grand surge of annoyance in his chest.

He flips off Techno without even thinking about it. Techno just laughs.

Tommy swats at his hand to get his attention. “Do you need more medicine?” He asks, then seems to realize Wil’s probably a little out of it still, and he twists in Wil’s arms to look at Phil instead. “Does he need more medicine?”

“He should probably eat something first.” Techno answers for him. “He did throw up into the sink last night.”

Wilbur blinks. Wait. He did do that. The entirety of last night is kinda fuzzy, to be honest, but he does remember stumbling through the dark, and then losing what little lunch he had.

After that, he- he fell asleep on the couch, didn't he?

He looks down at the blankets around them.

“Why are we on the floor?” Wilbur mutters. Don’t they literally have a bed? A rather large one, at that?

“Child’s orders.” Phil claps his hands together, and Tommy sticks his tongue out at him. “You guys had a sleepover here last night. Ah, I wish my camera still worked.” All of them sleeping cuddled together was a comforting sight, since there was still an undead horde shuffling around outside and all that.

“Thank goodness for the apocalypse’s lack of electricity.” Techno murmurs, climbing to his feet and stretching his arms up. Phil makes a sad noise.

“But you guys were all *hugging*. ”

Wilbur blinks. “What.”

“Blame Tommy.” Techno waves a hand, coughing into his palm.

“You were cold!” Tommy tells Wilbur, and that doesn't explain anything at all.

“ *Huh ?!*”

“And now you're not, so that means you're getting better.” Tommy nods, ignoring Wil's baffled face. He pushes himself away from Wilbur, flopping over on the blankets and pushing himself up to stand with Techno. “I'll get you breakfast!” He yells, running over to the kitchen.

Phil sniffs at the air. “Wait- Tommy, is the stove still on?”

Tommy gives a shriek from the kitchen. “Yeah!” Techno gives a groan, quickly making his way to the kitchen.

“A fire is the last thing we need at the moment, Phil- oh that pancake is *not* being eaten.” There's the shuffle of things being put aside. “Tommy, wave at the air.” An earnest flap of a towel.

Phil smiles, looking back at Wilbur, who stares at him like the world has turned upside down. He huffs and rubs at his head, trying to be rid of the headache there.

“What's going on?” Wilbur mumbles, Phil going to sit closer. “Did- I feel like I've missed something.”

Phil hums, seeming to be thoughtful. “What *do* you remember?”

“Uhhh.” Wil lifts his head, trying to think. He remembered throwing up, that was pretty vivid. Then he fell asleep on the couch, and Phil had brought him a blanket, he's pretty sure. Tommy had been talking to him at one point? Surely. He woke up again later, didn't he? Phil was there, but-

But he had been covered in blood.

Wilbur eyes Phil's clothes with a sudden drop in his stomach. It's soothed a bit by the sight of Phil being perfectly clean, his hair pulled back, and his bandages rewrapped over his arms, but the image from before doesn't leave his mind.

"Are...you okay?" Wilbur hesitantly asks.

Phil's look goes fond. "I'm alright, mate. It's been a busy night. There's-" He goes to say something, but seems to decide against it. "...there's...been some worry about you. Tommy was pretty upset about it."

Wilbur frowns. "I'm okay."

Phil snorts. "You look half-dead, Wil." He reaches an arm out and pulls Wil closer, Wilbur leaning right into him with a tired huff. "Maybe after you eat you could try taking a bath. You've still got dirt in your hair." Wilbur feels him poke at his curls for a moment.

He just leans his head further onto Phil's shoulder. "Where does Technoblade even *get* water for a bath?" He wonders aloud.

"He's got a water supply, actually. Granted, it's a little low since he can't- since he hasn't gone down to the storagehouse yet to refill it, but he's pretty stocked up on water."

"Huh." Wilbur frowns. "You're speaking funny."

"So are you. Sick and all." Phil hums, but there is definitely something suspicious about his expression. This morning is too calm. Something must be wrong.

That, or Wilbur's paranoia is just kicking in. Either way, he is missing something.

"What are you hiding?" Wil asks, narrowing his eyes up at Phil. "Are you sure you're okay?" He grabs at Phil's arm, pulling it closer, and he lifts up his bandaged palm to inspect for anything out of place.

It just looks like a bandage. Hiding away a zombie bite underneath.

Wilbur shivers. He's not going to ever get used to that thought.

Phil chuckles and squeezes his fingers around Wilbur's for a second, holding both their hands up before letting go. "I'm fine, Wilbur. Really. It's just been a busy night, and I'll tell you all about it when you *aren't* burning up." And with that, he moves his hand to Wil's forehead, keeping it there to just check if it's gotten any better since last night.

Wilbur scrunches his nose and looks up at Phil's wrist with a huff. "I'm not burning up, you're just *cold*." Phil snorts. "Probably because you're dead."

"Half-dead." Phil says, then he pauses. "Partially dead? Something like that. I have a heartbeat..." Phil's voice doesn't sound all that confident.

"Do you really?" Wil asks, skeptical. He pats at Phil's chest, as if trying to find his heart underneath the fabric.

Phil just snickers, looking entertained. He grabs at Wilbur's wrist. "Yes. Probably."

"Probably?" Wilbur sputters, shaking his head. That's it. Being immune to zombie bites and just having them- fucking, healing on his skin, is one thing, but not having a literal fucking *heartbeat* is an entirely other thing. That's where Wilbur is going to draw the line.

Wilbur digs his hands into Phil's shirt and leans down, putting his ear to the man's chest. He closes his eyes and listens close, and all he hears is the quiet wheezing of Phil failing to hold back laughter.

"Wilbur." Phil says, sounding all too amused.

"Shhh!" Wilbur tries to shut him up, but Phil only laughs even more, and Wil cannot hear any sort of heartbeat at all. Maybe there isn't one. Maybe Phil is just laughing too loud. Wil can't tell.

Phil pushes him back up, Wilbur giving a burning look of irritation. "Wilbur." He says.

"Phil." Wilbur mutters. "You better have a heartbeat."

Phil grins, tilting his head to the side. "And if I don't?"

"Then *get* one."

Phil laughs again, leaning forward with his hands holding on loosely to Wilbur's arms. Wilbur keeps trying to look mad at him, but Phil- that maybe heartless bastard- he's too endearing, and Wil gives a tiny smile to him.

Techno and Tommy return at that moment, Tommy running over with a bottle of syrup in one hand and forks in the other.

"I got you food, Wil!" Tommy declares, throwing the bottle down at Wilbur's feet. "Now eat it so you can have medicine."

"Child's orders." Techno says, giving a plate of pancakes to Wil, repeating Phil's own words from earlier. Tommy looks up at Techno with a little glare, and Techno expertly pretends to not notice, instead just giving the other plate to Phil.

Wilbur takes the food with slight wariness, eyeing Techno for a second, but then he freezes at seeing that it's actual pancakes just- there. Freshly cooked. Actually hot.

"What the fuck?" Wilbur blurts out, and Tommy holds a fork up in his face.

"Here." Wil takes the fork.

"Thank you, Tommy. Where the hell did you get *pancake mix*?" He lowers the plate onto his lap, looking at Techno and Phil with an incredulous face.

Phil looks at Techno for an answer, and Techno pauses, then shrugs. "I've taken over a lot of the city. There are a lot of supplies. Pancake mix was one of them."

Wilbur just blinks in confusion. Tommy pesters him to eat so he can have his medicine and not be sick anymore.

Wilbur takes a bath soon after, which-

"What the fuck." He repeats, Techno handing him a pile of clothes for him to change in after. Wilbur is too busy staring at the pool of water sitting in the bathtub, the liquid being clear and untouched and with *soap*.

Holy fuck, Wilbur has *missed* soap.

Techno adjusts the candle on the counter. "Word of warning, it's probably a little cold, considering everything, but it should still be fine. Watch your step coming out, and-" He nudges at scissors beside the sink. "-have these, if you want to...yeah."

Wilbur notes the eyes on his curls. He frowns. “My hair is fine.” He defends, Techno giving an unconvinced look.

“Well, it needs brushing, for sure.” He shrugs. “Don’t use my brush.”

“I’m going to use your stupid brush now just because you said that.” Wilbur mutters.

“If you can find it.” Techno hums, and he taps at one of the drawers beside him, then heads out of the bathroom. “Me and Tommy are going to go- work on something, in the bedroom. No going in there.”

Wil feels immense suspicion at that. “Why?” He turns to look at Techno hovering in the doorway.

Technoblade smiles. “It’s a surprise.” He says, ominous as fuck, and then he goes. “Phil should be in the living room once you’re done!” He calls, and Wilbur closes the door and turns the lock with a huff.

This guy. Is obviously up to something.

Once Wilbur has the energy to deal with it, he’ll do something about it. Or ask Phil to do something about it.

But as for now...

He sighs, turning around and setting the clothes in his arms onto the counter. It’s just more of Techno’s pajamas, Techno insisting that he won’t be going anywhere today, so there’s no need to dress up to head out.

Wil won't complain. To be entirely honest, he doesn't think he has it in him to fight another zombie anytime soon. He doesn't even think he'd be able to properly lift up his axe.

Wilbur looks into the mirror for a moment, seeing a tired face stare back, and he gives an annoyed noise at the sight. He feels okay, with better food and medicine in his stomach, but there is still this lingering sort of exhaustion on his shoulders. An ache in his limbs, and that annoying headache that comes and goes.

The quicker he takes a bath, the quicker he can go rest up. Lay back down on that nice pile of blankets.

Wil means to wash off all the dirt as fast as possible, but Techno had been kinda right about his hair- it's looking rough. He scrubs through it three times and rinses over and over until there's no more traces of blood. The feeling of having all of the muck off him is strange, but not unwelcome. He missed feeling somewhat clean. You tend to lose that privilege when surviving out in the open.

By the time Wilbur's done and rubbing a towel over his head, the water has turned into a gross muddled color, and he feels a bit better. Not good, definitely not, because he's still sick, but better. Not on the verge of falling over anytime soon.

He looks at the scissors with consideration for a second, glancing up at the mirror.

He goes searching through the drawers for Techno's brush instead.

Wilbur leaves the bathroom as a new man, feeling human again, but he still lacks the energy meant for a functional human being. Each step down the hall makes him want to go back to bed, and as he tries to check on what Techno and Tommy are doing, he only gets a "NO WILBUR ALLOWED!" from Tommy, and is banished off to the living room.

Fine. Wil is vaguely concerned about whatever they're up to, but it can wait. It's probably not going to result in flames. Probably.

He heads off to the living room to rest. Phil is there, just like how Techno said, and he gives a quiet laugh at Wilbur collapsing down onto the pillows with a long suffered groan.

"Tired?" He asks. Wil gives another groan in response.

He rolls onto his back and lays there like that, and time-

Drifts for a second.

He closes his eyes, just for a moment, and when he opens them, it feels like he's lost a few minutes.

The exhaustion has returned in a heaping amount, and Wilbur feels it crush against his body like an unforgiving weight. He huffs, turning his head to the side and feeling it nudge against Phil's knee. When had Phil moved there? Wil can't recall.

Oh well.

Phil doesn't seem to mind the head now resting against his leg, and he instead just lifts his hand to Wil's forehead and places his cold palm there, as if to check how he's doing.

A quiet unhappy noise comes from Wilbur's throat. Phil goes to take his hand away, and Wilbur whines even louder. He pulls his eyes open with all the strength he has, trying to muster an expression that says 'do *not* let me burn up and die in a puddle of warmth here'.

Phil seems to get the memo. The hand returns. Wilbur hums contently, and hears Tommy's laugh echo through the apartment, Techno's voice behind it. The sound is comforting, and Wilbur closes his eyes with a relieved sigh.

Everything must be okay. Tommy's okay, Phil's here, so it's okay.

"Go to sleep, mate. You really need it." Phil tells him, his voice hovering over Wil's head like a strange cloud, or something. Wilbur feels a headache coming on.

Maybe some water could help. Or more medicine? Could he have more medicine? Surely they have enough to spare, if Techno is that well stocked. If there's anything Wilbur's noticed in his time here, it's that this place is incredibly decked out.

There's food. Blankets. Water. *Medicine*.

Technoblade really has got his shit together, doesn't he? Wilbur feels a vague sense of jealousy at that, especially since he's never had the same, instead always needing to be on the move from a horde or needing to take shelter in a town that's always running low on supplies.

But here there is just so *much*. Wilbur is going to steal it all. Fuck Techno, the guy is probably- evil, or something. He won't miss like half his things.

Wil's throat burns a bit as he hums again. He huffs. Wait, water. He was going to ask for that. He cracks open his eyes to call Phil and catch his attention.

"Dad." He says, and-

Wait.

Wait.

That is *not* what Wilbur meant to say.

Shit.

His entire body tenses up with panic upon realizing the word that just came from his mouth, and his face burns up with not just a fever on his skin.

He looks up at Phil's face, dreading the reaction that's bound to come. He's already like half-asleep and everything, can't they forget this ever happened and let him pass the fuck out? He cannot handle emotions right now, because then they'll have to talk, and then Wilbur *is* going to cry, and he's sick, give him slack, *please*.

Wilbur holds his breath with a nervous look, waiting, watching. Phil...doesn't seem to react. He doesn't freeze, or freak out, or look at Wil with a confused face.

In fact, he just looks at Wilbur with a small, comforting smile, brushing his hair back out of his too-warm face. "Yeah, Wil?"

Huh.

Huh.

Maybe- maybe Phil just didn't hear him.

And with that thought, Wilbur's mind goes '*well then let's try again!*', and upon a terrible, unstoppable impulse, he does just that, his heart racing within his chest.

"Dad?" Wilbur repeats, mentally cursing out his entire existence. Damn you, impulse choices, we were in the clear!

But Phil, his mind supplies, and that makes no sense. Nothing makes sense. Wilbur wants sleep. The endless void offers escape from embarrassment, and that sounds wonderful, frankly.

Phil only raises his eyebrows at Wilbur. “Yes?”

Wilbur gives a baffled look. Has Phil lost his hearing? Or, or is Wilbur losing his hearing? Phil is just hearing this and he’s not- he’s not even correcting Wilbur. Maybe Wilbur is actually saying Phil, but he hears it as dad because- because he thinks of Phil as-

Ohhh no, he’s not getting into emotions.

It’s too late though, because there are already tears pooling in his eyes.

“Dad, I-” Wilbur tries to speak again, and no, wait, fuck, he meant to say Phil that time. Phil, Phil, he’s saying Phil, because Phil’s not dad, he’s Phil-

“Wilbur.” Phil says, yanking Wil out of his head. “You alright?” He sees Wilbur’s watery eyes. “Hey, hey. What’s wrong?”

So many things. Wilbur has a headache. He feels like shit. Everything is too hot. He keeps calling Phil dad when he didn’t *mean* to-

But he does want to.

And it’s not as if Phil is telling him to stop. He’s just- rolling with it. Maybe it’s because Wilbur’s sick. Maybe not.

“I didn’t-” *-mean to call you dad*, he tries to say, but it refuses to come out. “Water?” He asks, instead, throat hoarse, and Phil nods slowly, looking concerned.

“Sure, Wil. Be right back, okay?” And he goes, heading off to the kitchen, off to retrieve Wilbur his blessed cup of water.

Wilbur raises a hand up and touches his forehead, almost feeling as if Phil’s fingertips left a mark of some sort there. He huffs, rolling onto his side and giving a groan.

This is all fine. Entirely. He’ll just- not call Phil dad again. Ever again. They will never speak of it.

A single second passes with that plan before Wilbur is sad all over again. He doesn’t like that plan. New one.

He’s taking advantage of the situation. They all probably think he’s completely out of it. This works in his favor.

Maybe this is kinda manipulative, actually. Wait, is it even, though? He’s just calling Phil dad. No harm there. Only benefits, really. Wilbur’s happy, Phil’s maybe happy. Although this would be something to explain to Tommy.

Uhg, downsides. Future problem for future Wilbur.

Phil comes back with the cup of water. He helps Wil sit up, and Wilbur takes it between his palms, the glass feeling nice and cool against his skin.

“Thanks, dad.” He murmurs, throat tight since he actually did that one on purpose, this time.

Phil still doesn’t correct him. He just holds a hand to Wilbur’s arm, smiling so warmly that Wilbur does think he will die in the next few minutes. There's a flutter of victory within Wilbur's chest.

“Go to sleep, yeah mate?” Phil says, once Wil’s drank his water and laid back down beside Phil’s knee.

Wilbur blinks up at Phil, his heart feeling like it’ll burst. He hums.

“Okay.” He says, and he closes his eyes.

Chapter End Notes

Wilbur: You are my daaaad. You're my dad! Oogie boogie boogie.

Phil: Okay mate :D

Wilbur: wait you weren't supposed to know that. I didn't plan this far ahead

hmmm family dynamics. hurt comfort. tbh this chapter is kinda rushed but like. oh well!!! I hit post anyway!!! thank you for reading and pls leave a comment to fuel the next update

family dynamics family dynamics family dynamics

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“You almost done?”

Tommy hums, tongue sticking out in focus as he drags a red marker across his canvas, making a small doodle of red beanie. He can’t quite get the shape of the hat right, so he just keeps drawing over it, and in turn, keeps making the drawing bigger.

It’s a little *too* big, now, but Tommy thinks it looks like a beanie anyway. It’s beanie-shaped. It’s Wil’s hat, for sure. He’ll recognize it. Probably.

Leaning back and clicking the cap back onto the marker, Tommy taps the end of it against his chin, making a thoughtful noise. He takes in the sight of his delightful masterpieces, all bright and colorful against the quiet brown of a guitar. He’s put work into this one. It’s been a *long* while since Tommy’s had the chance to draw with crayons, ever since the zombies happened, but now that he’s been practicing, he likes to say he’s an expert.

An artist, even. If the world wasn’t dead, Tommy would be famous. He’s sure of it.

He scoots back further, throwing the marker beside him onto the bed covers and putting his hands out before him, as if framing the guitar with his fingers held in a square shape. He makes another noise of quiet consideration, the hum dragging on within his throat. He thinks he’s put everything in. He’s drawn all he can to make Wilbur’s gift perfect.

There’s Wil’s dumb beanie, of course, but there’s also a crude attempt at music notes, all crooked and probably a little wrong. There’s a few smiley faces drawn out in yellow and green. A couple wonky-looking flowers lay lined up against the side, and there’s a bright red-and-orange explosion sitting underneath it. (Tommy had thought it’d look cool. He is right, obviously.)

A vague shape of a cow is drawn on the other side of the guitar, with a pig snout right beside it. There's bright purple polka dots all around them, along with one tiny pink sword drawn onto the very edge, courtesy of Techno getting bullied into adding at least one thing.

Tommy smiles, tracing his finger over the sword and feeling a slight urge to make a crown right above it. Just so it matches all his other drawings too. Techno's always the zombie king in his drawings, so Tommy's gotta keep up with the consistency. Keep the brand.

"Tommy?" Techno asks again, and Tommy looks for the yellow marker amongst all the others thrown carelessly onto the covers.

"Mhm?" He finds it amongst the pink and blue. He pops the cap off, and begins on a little crown shape, just above the sword. It's kinda off center, but Tommy thinks it works anyhow. He focuses on filling it in.

"Almost done?" Technoblade asks again, this time with something a little like amusement in his tone. He still stands by the door, arms across, back to the wall, like some sort of intimidating bodyguard not letting anyone in.

Technically, that is what he is. He had to keep Wilbur out, after all. Tommy can't have the surprise being ruined.

"No." Tommy says, leaning in close to the guitar and giving all his focus on filling in the crown just right. He colors over the lines by mistake, and frowns. Guess he'll draw this one bigger, too.

"You should leave a little space open." Techno suggests. "Maybe Phil could draw something on there too."

"Is he a good drawer?" Tommy asks, squinting at his crown and seeing it be slightly crooked now. He adds more yellow onto the other side.

“I think so...” Technoblade trails off, sounding like he’s trying to remember. “He did like doodling when we were bored, sometimes.” Sketching away in a little notepad, making pictures of the birds that always hung outside their base, Techno remembers that.

That was one of the few calm moments he got before everything started climbing into an ongoing run for survival. That was before the hoard *hit*. When the streets were still eerily empty, and survivors were still being somewhat decent towards one another.

“Hmmm.” Is all Tommy gives as a response to that, and he gives up on making the crown perfect, capping the market and throwing it to the side. The crown looks kinda funky, but it’s a crown, nevertheless. Wilbur will like it. If Tommy made it, he’ll like it.

He grabs at the guitar and carefully turns it over to look at the back, which is mostly untouched from any drawings. Tommy itches to make something cool with all the space, but he tells himself he can do it later, with Wilbur. They can both decorate this spot and then it’ll be entirely worth it.

Right now, he just needs to add the important thing.

Tommy picks up the red marker again, pulling off the cap and leaning over the wood, writing in the neatest lettering he can manage.

‘For Wilbur’, he writes. *‘From, Tommy and...’*

“Techno!” Tommy calls, holding out the marker towards him. “Put your name on it.”

Technoblade blinks. He stands up straight up from where he had been leaning against the wall, but he hesitates to move. “Wouldn’t-”

“Sign it!” Tommy cuts him off, waving the marker higher into the air.

Techno gives a short, fond sigh. He goes. "Okay, okay." Tommy holds out the marker expectantly as Techno comes over to sit on the bed beside him, the frame creaking very quietly. He leans over and writes his name out with no struggle at all, the word seeming rather out of place beside Tommy's own jerky sort of handwriting.

Tommy thinks it's perfect.

"There." Techno says, closing the marker and putting it down, watching Tommy pull the guitar onto his knees with a wide grin. He helps turn the instrument over to reveal the front, where most of the drawings are.

"Do you think he's gonna like it?" Tommy asks, reaching over the wood, his fingers plucking at the strings and having it give a quiet *twang*. It's still out of tune, but he figures Wil can fix that.

Techno huffs, fiddling with the marker in his hand and pushing at the cap to make sure it's closed shut. He looks at the guitar in Tommy's lap, the wood all scribbled over with little drawings made by a 7 year old's hand.

It's a little messy looking, if anything, but Techno can't have any doubt about Wilbur liking this. He knows how fondly that guy looks at Tommy. Frankly, Techno's pretty sure Tommy could give a piece of trash to Will right now, and Wilbur would still cherish it all the same.

Although, he won't say that the guitar looks all *that* bad. The drawings add a bit of life onto the wood, and it's a perfect touch for a gift specifically from Tommy. It's bright, childish. It's good.

"Yeah, he'll like it." Techno reassures, Tommy plucking at the guitar again, trying to play something. It doesn't sound right, with it all out of tune. He makes an unhappy expression at the noise, and he relents on pulling at the strings. "You ready to show him?"

“Is *he* ready?” Tommy asks, raising his head towards the door, like he’ll be able to see Wilbur through the wall. “What’s he doing?” Tommy whispers, leaning in towards Techno.

Techno resists the slight urge to snort. He gets up from the bed, heading towards the door to check, and giving a signal towards Tommy for him to wait.

The hallway is empty and quiet when he peeks out. He strains his ears for any sort of conversation from the living room, but when he gets nothing, he decides to step out and take a closer look. He peeks out around the corner to glance into the living room, and finds Phil sitting on their make-shift bed of blankets, having a rather intense staring contest with Floof.

Floof sits across from Phil, a good distance away, but still close enough to give a good glare. If dogs can even glare. They’re both perfectly frozen in the moment, Phil’s expression held in something like a teasing smile.

It honestly looks like Floof might be winning, in Techno’s opinion. Phil seems rather determined though, for which Techno doesn’t understand, but he’s not going to be asking questions. For a second, Techno doesn’t spot Wilbur sitting beside him, and he’s wondering where he could’ve gone, but then he realizes he’s just looking towards the wrong spot.

Wilbur’s there, but he’s sprawled out at Phil’s knees, curled up amongst the pillows. Techno can only just see the edge of his curls, his face hidden away into the fabric of Phil’s pants. He’s seeming to be sleeping rather peacefully, unlike how he had been last night. Maybe the medicine has started to help.

One of Phil’s hands stays resting on his shoulder as he sleeps, like a constant reminder to Wil that he’s there. Or maybe like a constant assurance that he’s keeping watch.

Techno remembers again of what they both endured just to get here. (That horde outside, dead and rotting, going on for miles.)

He wonders just how often they slept like that, with Phil keeping watch on the horde nearby, Wilbur sleeping quietly beside him.

Days, he remembers. Nothing but zombies at both their heels for days on end. It'd make sense for them to grow trust in each other in that sort of situation. With so much risk of death at every turn, that atmosphere demands for support. For them to be watching each other's back.

But it reminds Techno a little bit of him and Phil before. Hadn't they once done the same, as well? Techno sleeping on the cold ground, Phil at his side to keep an eye out for the both of them.

It gives a vague sense of déjà vu, seeing the sight all over again, only with Wilbur in his place. He feels a weird type of companionship with Wil for it. Maybe that's just because Phil's company is something that they both can mutually understand. There's a connection to be found there, even ground they can settle on. Techno makes a mental note to maybe use it later on, if he needs to find something to talk with Wilbur about.

Floof gives a light woof out of the blue, yanking Techno out from his head. He watches as the dog presses its paws against the blankets and keeps attention directly onto Phil. Phil only lowers his head towards Floof with a wide grin, and he tilts his head to the side with something near anticipation.

Floof gives another low woof.

"Shh." Phil holds a finger to his mouth, glancing at Wilbur. He stays sleeping, unaware of the epic showdown before him.

Floof only makes a grumbling sort of growl.

"I swear you'll warm up to me eventually." Phil promises, and Techno snorts. Phil hears it, and he turns his eyes over to the hallway, catching Techno standing right behind the corner.

Technoblade goes still, stuck in the choice of stepping away to hide and stepping out to not make it awkward. He ends up just still half-hiding, Phil giving a curious smile as Floof

barks.

“Shh.” Phil turns back to Floof, trying to shush him. “I am just *sitting* here.”

Floof doesn't like that. He gets up from where he's sitting and trots over to Techno, looking at him as if expecting for him to do something about the possible intruder in the home. Technoblade only huffs and pats at the dog's head, sending him back into the living room.

“Not a zombie, Floof.” He tells him, before turning around with the sound of Phil's light laughter behind him.

He goes back over to the bedroom, finding Tommy still sitting on the bed, eyes wide with excitement, the guitar clutched tight in his arms.

“What's he doing?” Tommy immediately asks, and Techno's wondering who he's asking about before remembering he was meant to go check on Wilbur and if he was ready for a surprise. He got a bit distracted by Phil.

Can't blame him, really. Phil's just a swell guy.

“Sleeping.” Techno says, closing the door quietly behind so as to soften their voices. He doesn't think they'd actually be able to wake up Wilbur from here, but he'd rather be careful anyhow, especially with how quiet the apartment is at the moment. It's very calm. “I think we're going to have to wait.”

“WHAT?!” Tommy yells. There goes the calm, flying out the window. “No!”

“It's fine.” Technoblade holds a hand up, and Tommy is kicking his way off the bed, pulling the guitar with him.

“No, it’s not! He *needs* his guitar!” Tommy insists, trying to hold it up as if the sight will convince Techno. “We have to give it to him!”

“We will.” Techno says, holding a palm onto the top of the instrument to steady it. “It’s not like I’m telling you to go throw it out.” He deadpans, and that only seems to make Tommy even more upset.

“But I- I worked on it and everything!” Tommy goes on, tapping at the guitar’s drawings. “Look! There’s even a big explosion!”

Technoblade raises his eyebrows. “I can see that. It’s very cool looking. But we can’t give it now.”

Tommy frowns, shaking his head like the entire world is coming to an end. He goes quiet for a second, and Techno expects some more yelling, maybe even for him to get a burst of determination and go marching out to wake up Wilbur anyway.

But then comes the glimmer of tears in his eyes.

“Oh-” Technoblade fumbles with the sudden unexpected reaction for a second, quickly kneeling down to be at eye level with Tommy. He practically collapses onto the floor, hand held tightly on the guitar. “Wait- no, no, no, we can still give it to him. I’m not saying no.”

“You’re not saying *yes*, either.” Tommy squeezes his eyes shut, turning his head down. Technoblade takes the guitar fully from his grip, holding it upright at his side and raising a hand to Tommy’s face. He tilts Tommy’s chin back up.

“Because right now isn’t the best time.” Techno reasons, trying to not let himself sound as panicked as he feels. You can’t blame him really, the first sight of any tears from Tommy will always make Techno go into panic mode. “He’s sleeping. And he’s still sick. Wouldn’t it be better to give it to him when he’s actually more aware and not, well, half-asleep?”

“I want to give it to him now.” Tommy mutters, painfully stubborn. Techno rubs at the edge of the kid’s eyes to push away any oncoming tears.

“It’ll still be a surprise.”

“But I want to do it *now*. ”

“If we do it later, you can have more time to add more things onto it.” Technoblade bargains. “Maybe Phil can even draw something cool on the back. And add his name. Wilbur would like that, wouldn’t he?”

Tommy still frowns, lips pressed tightly together.

“He could draw another explosion. A really cool one.”

The kid looks up at him, sniffing once.

“Or maybe he could draw Floof. That would be nice, right?”

That seems to get him for a moment. Tommy looks considerate for a second, before huffing harshly through his nose and giving a jerky nod.

“Yeah. So we can wait. This is better. He’ll love it anyway.” Technoblade nods with him. “Okay?”

Tommy’s silent for a long moment, but he scrunches his nose and wipes at his eyes, and gives one last big nod. “Okay.” He says, though clearly not all that pleased about it. He’s trying his best to look okay with it though, and for that, Techno’s proud.

Technoblade leans forward and presses his forehead against Tommy's, trying to urge away the rest of what little tears there are. Tommy closes his eyes with the gesture, seeming soothed. He holds a hand up to Techno's hair for a moment, and then lowers it when Techno leans away.

"Alright." Techno says, and he stands up, taking the guitar with him. "I'm going to hide this in the closet, then, okay? So Wilbur won't find it too early."

"Okay." Tommy crosses his arms over his chest, and watches Techno go do just that, walking across the room to put the guitar out of sight, in case Wil does ever wander his way back into the bedroom. "...what do we do now?" He asks, a little hesitant about it.

"You could go and take a nap with Wilbur?" Techno suggests, adjusting the guitar amongst his shirts. Tommy only huffs, narrowing his eyes. The silence is answer enough. "Or you could go try and calm down Floof. He keeps trying to scare off Phil."

Tommy blinks in surprise at that. "Why? He liked Wilbur." Why not Phil, the unspoken question says.

"Yeah, but Wil's not-" Technoblade goes to say, but then he pauses, words trailing off. Wait.

He looks at Tommy's waiting look for a second, and realizes that they never really did get around to telling the kid that Phil is actually bit. More than that, Phil's been bit at least several times at this point. He is at least like- very infected, at this point.

Should he just break that news now? How does one even break that sort of news, especially to a child? *'Oh, the dog doesn't like Phil because he's partially infected, that's probably why.'* Ah yes, that will invoke a sense of calm and rationality within the seven year old.

Suddenly, Techno feels a slight bit of respect for Phil with him being able to drop such news with relative ease. He also feels a sense of panic at the fact that Tommy doesn't *know*.

“Wil’s not what?” Tommy asks, his expression expectant.

“Uh.” Techno closes the closet door, faltering.

“Wil’s not what?!” Tommy asks, louder, if only to snap Techno out of his thoughts.

“Scary.” Techno supplies, and Tommy’s face scrunches up. “He’s not very scary, so Floof doesn’t mind him.”

“Well, yeah, Wil’s not scary at all.” Tommy scoffs, as if that’s common knowledge. “But Phil isn’t scary either.” Tommy stands tall, ready to argue. “He’s just dumb looking. Although, I think Wilbur likes him, so I guess that’s fine.”

Technoblade sputters a bit, turning to Tommy. “I also like Phil.”

“Oh.” Tommy blinks. “Then he’s not dumb-looking.”

Techno snorts. “Don’t *you* like Phil?”

Tommy shrugs, with a careful air of nonchalance. “He’s a Phil.”

“What does that mean?”

“I dunno. He looks like a Phil.” Tommy turns to the door. “A Phillip. Philliam.”

“*Philliam* ?”

“Like Wilbur’s name! William.” Tommy nods, as if it all makes much sense. Techno just feels kinda baffled. But there’s a touch of amusement with it. “I’m gonna go see Floof.” Tommy excuses himself directly from the conversation, pulling open the door and escaping out into the hallway.

Techno watches him go with a fond huff. He goes to pick up all the markers left on the bed.

Even if Tommy had been joking, Techno really does hope he ends up liking Phil. They seem to be alright with each other so far, but Technoblade feels like that’s more of just because Tommy’s placed Phil as ‘someone important to Wilbur’, if anything. He’d rather the kid build an actual relationship with Phil, rather than have it be purely surrounding Wilbur. It’d be smoother sailing for all of them if they all had trust in each other.

He supposes that means he’s also got to make an effort on his part too, though. Wilbur doesn’t exactly hate him, but it’s not like they’re about to be hugging anytime soon. (At least, not voluntarily. He’s pretty sure if Tommy demanded it enough, he’d rope them into doing anything.) There’s some sort of weird angry energy going with Wil, and does Techno understand it? Absolutely not. He’s been the equivalent of an apocalypse hermit for the better part of a year, emotions are *not* his strong suit.

Honestly, Technoblade’s not sure what he even *did* to get on Wil’s bad side. Maybe it’s something to do with Tommy. Wilbur does seem to cherish Tommy an awful lot, and they *did* kinda assume Techno was a random dangerous survivor. Pair that assumption with the knowledge of Tommy being under his wing for a good while, and you’ve got a worried and angry brother determined on getting the kid back.

Yeah, that’s probably it.

They’re probably going to have to work over it soon. It’d be no good for Wil to keep glaring daggers at him whenever they’re within six feet of each other. That’s going to cause some awkwardness over the dinner table when they eat.

Techno pauses.

Wait. Now that he's thinking about it, is his dinner table even big enough for the four of them? They haven't tried it yet, but now that he's considering the option, he's realizing that they might have to resort to just eating together in the living room for the time being. Here comes the tradition of sitting on the ground circled around food, like the good old beginning days of the apocalypse.

And doesn't *that* thought make Techno pause even further.

While the thought of all of them having each other's company is- nice, on its own, it's got another sort of factor to it. There is something so terribly *domestic* about having all of them together in this little apartment, faced with the fact that they're going to be living together for the time being. They're going to be sharing meals, sharing space. Sharing the makeshift bed, by the looks of it. (Technoblade is very much hoping that Tommy insisting on cuddles isn't going to be a daily thing.)

Techno knows he's had a taste of simple life with Tommy, and even before that on his own, but now it's more than just a single kid demanding his attention and time. Now it's more than just him living day to day and passing the time by.

Now it's like the days have been given a much more weightful type of meaning. Now he's going to have Phil, who he knows, loves, remembers more than anything. Now he's going to have Wilbur, who's such a stranger, and yet not, with how interwoven the guy is with the people Techno cares for. Now there is company. Voices, people, who he- trusts.

It's kinda like Techno's back in time, with those survival groups before. But this isn't quite like that, because no matter what, those groups had always been rather distant. Those people always kept away, refusing to make any lasting relationships with how often tensions rose every day.

This is a little closer now. Like with Phil. It's like having each other's back, but more with a sense of fondness. Less of a danger of the apocalypse, and all the worries that come with it. They only have this home, and the people within it, all of them living together and being safe.

It's a nice thought, to be fair. Techno huffs. It's kinda like they're a-

-family.

Technoblade stops.

He breathes in, and gathers up the markers in his hands, throwing them to the side and not caring to search through to see if he's gotten them all. He moves out of the bedroom, moving on from that whole entire thought process.

He's not lingering on this. It makes him feel too *soft*, and he can only handle that in small Tommy-sized doses, thank you very much.

He heads out into the hallway, hearing Tommy and Phil from the living room and hovering in place for a second just to hear them. He stays firmly out of sight this time, and listens in on their conversation.

"-what's the scariest thing you've done, then?" Tommy is asking, voice quiet as if keeping in mind about Wilbur still asleep nearby. "I once shot a zombie. That makes me scary."

"I once shot *two* zombies." Phil responds, a teasing tilt at the end of it.

"Then I've shot four!" Tommy snaps back. "Other than zombies. What else? There has to be something cool."

"I don't know what you'd consider cool, exactly..."

"Technoblade once threw a rock and broke a window, did you know that? That's cool. Then I threw one too and we both broke windows." A pause. "That was fun."

It had been, to be honest. Tommy had gotten particularly bored on that patrol, and Techno really doesn't see the harm in breaking a few windows in the streets that he doesn't really need. It's not like he's going to be touching those buildings any time soon. They're just gathering dust. Why not let the kid throw a few rocks at them?

"Well, then." Phil hums. "I once...crashed a car?"

Technoblade freezes.

"Really?!" Tommy gasps. "Wait, before or after the zombies?"

"After. We were pushing the thing down a hill to get away from a horde. It worked, but I ended up crashing into a wall."

Oh.

Techno rubs at his face with a silent sigh.

Even with just the word of a car crash, his first thought is of *that one*. The one where it all went to shit.

He swears he's gotten over it, but he's not quite sure why his heart feels so unsteady with a simple reminder. He forces himself to focus on Tommy's response, ignoring the tightness in his chest.

"Now that's cool." Tommy says approvingly. Phil chuckles softly. "I wanna drive a car."

"Maybe you could get one working around here. After everything is dealt with." Phil chuckles again. "Although, I don't think you'll be able to reach the pedals."

“I can!”

“Shhh.” Phil hushes him softly.

“I can.” Tommy repeats, in a whisper. “I’m gonna drive *so* fast.”

“Yeah?” Phil asks, as if he’s reconsidering letting Tommy learn to drive now. Techno knows for a fact *he’s* not letting Tommy behind the wheel until he’s at least ten. “You won’t have to deal with any traffic, at least.”

“I might run over a zombie or two.”

“Now that would be fun.”

Techno smiles, and chooses that moment to walk out from the hallway, heading into the living room and catching both Phil’s and Tommy’s attention at once. Tommy’s sitting down beside Floof, the dog laying on its back and letting the kid give belly rubs. Phil is still where he was before, with Wilbur asleep beside him.

“Techno! I want to drive a car.” Tommy says as a greeting, and Techno raises his eyebrows, not stopping his steps and walking past.

“Really?” He asks, not looking towards Tommy, but still speaking to him all the same. “I guess we can do that instead of going out to shoot with a gun on your birthday.”

Tommy’s face falls into near horror. “No! I want a gun!” He calls after Techno.

“What?” Phil blinks, watching Techno head into the kitchen. “Hey, wait, Techno, where are you going?”

“Trying to figure out lunch.” Techno calls back, stepping into the kitchen and looking at the counters with a thoughtful hum. There’s still dishes and the pancake mix from earlier this morning, so he takes the time to put them in the sink and clear the table off. Might as well.

As he goes to put the pancake mix back into the pantry, he scans over what food he has and thinks of what exactly he should feed his guests here. Tommy’s never all that picky about food, but he’s not sure what Phil and Wilbur would like.

Then again, those two are just barely coming off the road as survivors. He’s pretty sure they’ll eat anything on their plate, rather than have silly things such as preferences. Such is the effect of the apocalypse.

Techno huffs. He’s really got to get rid of those zombies in the road. He can’t have Phil and Wilbur getting used to enjoying peaceful life if there’s still corpses shuffling around down the block. It’s counter-productive.

He focuses back on food. Considering the fact they’ve got a sick person on their hands, maybe soup wouldn’t be so bad. His first thought had been just baked potatoes, but he could make a soup out of that. Wouldn’t be too hard. He checks the basket where he usually stores his vegetables and finds only a few sitting inside.

To the roof he goes then. The garden oughta have more.

“Here, Tommy, watch over Wil for me.” Phil’s voice rises up from the living room. Techno glances out of the kitchen to watch Tommy take Phil’s spot next to Wil, seeming incredibly determined and focused on him, before growing curious and beginning to fiddle with his brother’s curls. He seems content doing that, and Wilbur sleeps on undisturbed.

Phil’s head pops into the kitchen just as Techno closes the pantry doors.

“So, lunch ideas?” He asks, Techno’s lips twitching up.

“Potatoes.” Techno only says, and he goes to put on his shoes. “Watch over Wil and Tommy for me, I’ll be right back.”

“Woah, woah. Hey, wait a minute.” Phil immediately is at his heels, grabbing at the back of Techno’s shirt and yanking him backwards. Techno stumbles a bit, not expecting it, and Phil takes the chance to circle around in front of him and stay standing in the way, hands on his hips. “Where do you think you’re going?”

Techno adjusts his shirt. “To get ingredients?”

“From outside?” Phil raises his eyebrows, and Techno makes an awkward shrug. “Have you forgotten about the horde on the street?”

“I’ve got a garden on the roof.” Technoblade points a finger up to the ceiling, Phil’s face shifting away from worry. “If you want, I could show you while we grab some potatoes. It won’t take long.”

“Oh.” Phil says, looking at Wilbur and Tommy in the living room. “I-” He stops.

Techno looks back with him, taking in the sight before turning back towards Phil. “It’ll only take a few minutes, honest. And Tommy knows how to get up there.”

That seems to do it. Phil nods.

“Alright, but we make it quick.” Phil insists, walking past Techno to stand by the kitchen doorway. “Tommy.” He calls.

Tommy looks towards them, raising his head with attention.

“We’re going up to Techno’s garden real quick, alright mate?”

Tommy suddenly frowns, his face going sour. "Bye, then." He says, turning back to Wilbur and continuing to play with his hair. Phil makes a confused noise at the reaction.

"He's got a grudge against the garden." Techno supplies, Phil turning to him with a curious expression. "Especially since I banned him from touching the plants."

"He never lets me play with the dirt." Tommy mutters, Phil's eyes crinkling with an amused smile. "He's boring, Phil."

Techno just sighs, something long and tired, yet so very fond. "I *need* the dirt, Tommy, you can't just fling it off the roof to see it hit the street."

Tommy only grunts, keeping his gaze away from Techno.

"Well, maybe after all this, we can go searching for some more dirt to make a sandbox or something." Phil suggests. "Would you like that, Tommy?"

Tommy pauses for a second in where he's trying to braid Wilbur's hair. "Hm. Yeah." He looks at Phil, then Techno. "I want that."

"We'll figure it out." Technoblade murmurs, smiling gently. "We'll be back." He calls, going to put on his shoes. Phil follows behind.

"Kay!"

"You know where the garden is if you need us."

"Yup!"

“If Wilbur is being sick again, come get us.”

“Uh-huh.”

“Floof is in charge.”

Tommy’s head snaps up at that. “Wha- hey!”

Technoblade only snickers, and he goes out the door, Phil pulling it shut behind them.

“When did you become a farmer?” Is the first thing that comes out of Phil’s mouth the moment they’re out in the hallway. Techno tilts his head at Phil with a narrowed look, and all that he is met with is a wide, teasing grin. He makes himself look away, struggling to hold back a smile of his own.

Techno leads them over to the stairwell. “Since I found out there’s a garden on the roof. Along with plants that were abandoned, but still salvageable.” He pushes open the door to let them through to the stairs, and Phil goes ahead, jumping up on the steps to look back at Techno.

“Yeah, but I wouldn’t have thought you’d go through the effort of managing that, yknow? I mean. You’ve got a *lot* of shit in your storage.” Phil hadn’t really had time to appreciate it, with the zombies trying to murder them and all, but from what he remembers, that was outright impressive. “Why garden when you could just live off cans for a whole year?”

“It’s self sustainable.” Techno defends, walking past Phil, the two of them making their way up. Their voices echo off the walls as they move. “Cans aren’t going to last me forever.”

“I mean, with that amount, it might.”

Techno levels Phil with a deadpan look, and Phil snorts. “Still.”

“What do you grow, then?” Phil asks.

“Potatoes.”

“And?”

“That’s it.”

Phil makes a face. “That’s it?! You want to be self-sustainable but you’re just growing only potatoes?!”

“To be fair, it was all that was there when I found it. Whoever that garden belonged to before, they did not care for any other type of vegetable.”

“You could change it up. Grow something else?”

“Nah.” Techno waves a hand, spotting the door up ahead leading out to the roof. He pushes it open for the two of them. “Gotta carry on the legacy.”

“Grow the legacy, you little shit. Fucking expand your choices.” Phil pushes lightly at Techno’s shoulder, and Techno laughs, shaking his head. Phil goes to say something else, but his words stay silent as he takes in the sight of the roof.

It’s not much, honestly. It’s mostly empty, save for a few chairs and the garden put to the side. There’s the air conditioning units that Techno’s been using as tables, and there’s a random spoon put to the side, of which Techno suddenly remembers it belonging to Tommy.

He goes to snatch it up from the ground, rubbing dirt stains off it. The kid had been using this to dig, the last time they were up here. After Techno had caught him, Tommy had flung the thing out of sight, and Technoblade had been too wound up in Tommy's earnest arguing to bother thinking of where it went.

With a quiet smile, he puts the spoon away in his pocket so he can return it back to the kitchen. He turns to find Phil looking over the ledge of the roof, leaning against the ledge on his elbows.

He goes to join him, and as he does, the sight of the street comes into view. It leaves his steps faltering, and he hovers behind Phil, something uneasy curling inside his chest, just for a second.

"That's a lot of zombies." Techno mutters, staring out into the street with Phil, and looking at the sheer number of dead, rotting bodies stumbling their way around.

Phil hums in agreement. "They're a pain in the ass."

Technoblade snorts. He comes closer to Phil's side, and hesitantly leans against the ledge too, looking down at the street. He's filled with a sense of annoyance, at seeing the horde.

"This is going to take forever to clear out." Techno almost whines, slumping down and thinking of the work he's going to have to put in to get all of these things out.

"You can wait for them to just move along?" Phil suggests.

"They're not going to do that. They got in through the only opening, they're just kinda stuck here." Techno sighs, propping his head up in his palm. "I'm going to need to push them all out."

"That's going to take a while." Phil says, and Techno could not agree more. "'What are you going to do after? When you've got it all cleared out?'"

Technoblade makes a considering noise for a moment before answering. “Probably build up the walls again. Reinforce them better so we’ll be safer in here.”

Phil seems to pause at that. He spare a glance to Techno. “You’re not going to go out?”

“Go out where?” Techno raises his eyebrows.

“I don’t- I don’t know, just-” Phil laughs a little, as if he’s realized his words are a little ridiculous. He waves out at the street. “Out there. You’ve been here for a while.”

Techno nods, not denying it. He has been kinda holed up here for a long time. But he doesn’t think there’s any push for him to go. Even with the zombies at his doorstep, what reason does he have to travel out there? All that there out there is more apocalypse and more zombies. In here, there’s-

Technoblade looks at Phil. “I got all I need, I think. I don’t need to leave.”

Phil looks back at him, blinking, before breaking out in a grin. “Yeah, I guess so. I guess I’m just used to constantly heading out.”

“Well, say goodbye to that lifestyle!” Techno hits his palms onto the ledge of the roof, spinning around and heading towards the garden. “Now you’ve got potatoes to tend to. Come help me gather a few.”

Phil laughs, then goes.

HI THERE GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN IT'S TWO AM AND I'M A FOOL

thanks for reading leave a comment I'm gonna go roll down a hill weeeeeee

BONDINGGGGG!! THEYRE BONDINGGG!!!!!!

WAHHHHHHHHH

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Techno and Phil return to the apartment with a heavy basket of potatoes in hand, the mood feeling warm and calm.

Phil has a quiet persistent thought at the back of his head that demands attention. He thinks of the horde outside, of the walls put around the streets of this city, of the towns that are far out past this territory. He means to consider something important about all that, but as they open the door to the sound of someone retching out their breakfast, it's left for another time. Phil leaves behind his concerns for the familiar feeling of fatherly worry. (He's not sure when such worry became so damn familiar.)

"Ah, shit." Phil swears, quickly stepping past Techno to make his way to the living room. Technoblade lets him go by, moving to the kitchen to put down the basket he's holding. "Tommy? Wilbur?" Phil calls.

"Wil's sick!" Tommy gives as a response, and Phil walks into the living room to find Wilbur curled over a small trash bin, his face tucked into it as his shoulders shake with something that sounds like a sob.

Tommy sits right beside him, his hands held hesitantly on his lap. He looks like he doesn't know what to do, where to reach or what to get. "Maybe something was bad with the pancakes." Tommy says up at Phil, chewing at his lip with a furrowed brow.

"No, Toms, I'm sure it's just his stomach." Phil reassures, kneeling down in front of Wil with a sympathetic click of his tongue. He reaches forward to try and pull back Wilbur's hair, so that it won't be falling into his face. "Did he just start throwing up?" He asks Tommy, and Wilbur gives a pitiful noise before heaving again.

“Yeah.” Tommy shifts in where he’s sitting. “He woke up and said he felt sick, so I ran and went to get a trash bin.” He wrinkles his nose with the smell of bile in the air. “Then you got home.”

Phil’s heart tugs at little at the simple word of *home*. He brushes over it, holding Wilbur’s hair up in a resemblance of a ponytail. “That’s good. You did good. It wouldn’t be nice if he got all sick on himself.”

“That would be gross.”

“Yes, it would be.” Phil smiles, and Wilbur’s body shakes again, despite his stomach no longer having anything to give. He gasps for air like he’s ran a marathon, spitting out the bitter taste on his tongue, then he glances up at Phil with a weary look.

“Dad?” He croaks out, sounding absolutely miserable. There’s tears brimming on the edges of his eyes, and Phil means to say something to sooth him, but he freezes still instead, stuck in the realization that Wilbur’s said that in front of *Tommy*.

“Hey, mate.” Phil says carefully, sparing a quick glance at Tommy’s face to see if there’s any reaction. All he sees is a slightly confused stare, something indecipherable in Tommy’s little gaze. Phil has no idea what to do with such a look. He turns back to Wil. “How are you feeling?”

“Everything is shit.” Wilbur declares, lifting his chin up to take a deep breath of fresh air. “I feel like shit.”

“Yeah, I’d think so.” Phil nods, letting go of Wilbur’s hair so that he can take the bin from his arms. Wilbur gives no struggle at handing it over.

Phil puts the bin to the side to get the sight away from Wil, and then pushes his palm up against Wilbur’s hairline for a moment, just to check his temperature. When he finds it to be a bit warm, he then goes to push back his curls, so that they can maybe not fall right back into his sweaty face. Wilbur closes his eyes and leans against his palm, giving a slight wince.

“I thought he was getting better.” Tommy says, sounding distracted. He’s staring off in a way that looks as if he’s deep in thought, then he shakes his head to bring himself out of it. “Didn’t the medicine help?!” He yells, tilting his head back up to look at Wil.

“It will.” Phil reassures, pulling his hand away and standing to his feet. “He just needs more rest.” He says, and as he turns towards the kitchen, he sees Techno walk out with a cup of water in his hand. A burst of gratitude rests over his chest. He watches as Wilbur takes the water like it’s his saving grace, wanting to wash out his mouth and fend away any dryness sticking to his tongue.

“I love you.” Wilbur murmurs, cradling the cup as soon as it’s handed over. Techno snorts. “I’m sayin’ that to the *water*.” Wil adds, at Techno’s laugh. He tries to glare up at Technoblade while also sipping his water. It doesn’t make a very intimidating picture.

“Doesn’t make it any less amusing.” Techno says, crossing his arms. Tommy blinks at the two of them, slow and processing, then he looks at Phil, who’s busy tying up the trash back in the bin. He stares for a second, two, then he breaks out into a wide grin, like he’s figured out something that they don’t know. He holds his hands over his mouth.

“Any idea where to throw this away?” Phil asks, pointing to the trash bag.

Technoblade holds his hand out. “I can just move it to the apartment next door for the time being.” Usually with trash like that, he’d go find a dumpster or something around the city, but seeing as said city is overrun with the dead right now, he’ll have to settle for just having it sit somewhere else in the building.

Phil waves a hand. “I’ll do it. Stay with Wil.” He says, and he tugs the bag out of the bin, quickly leaving to go dispose of it away from their home. Tommy watches him go with a small smile.

“Gross.” He says, before then turning his attention onto Wil. “You need to stop throwing up.” He orders.

Wilbur sighs, his cup now half-empty. Techno heads off to the kitchen to retrieve some more medicine.

“I’ll try my best.” Wilbur answers to Tommy, sounding rather exhausted. More than anything, he’d like to pass the fuck out. He looks for somewhere to place his cup down so he can do just that.

“Try harder.” Tommy insists, shoving a hand at Wilbur’s arm. “One hundred percent effort.”

“I’ll give...seventy.” Wilbur offers.

“No!” Tommy shakes his head. “It has to be a hundred!”

“Sixty.” Wil holds out his cup. “Hold this.”

Tommy takes the cup with a firm grip. “Gimme one hundred!” He insists.

“Fifty’s the best I got.” Wilbur groans, and he flops back onto his bed of blankets and pillows, huffing out with a warm breath. “Fifty two?”

“You’re just going lower!”

“Mhmm.” Wilbur gives a vague nod, curling up on his side and burying his face into a nearby pillow. He ignores how Tommy hits him in his side with the cup, the water sloshing around dangerously as he does so.

“Willllll. Wilbah. Wilby!” Tommy yells, trying to get his brother’s attention while he’s still somewhat coherent. It’s only a matter of time until he’s back to being asleep. Tommy must get his Wilbur time while he can. “Wil!” Wilbur groans.

Technoblade returns from the kitchen then, with a small cup of medicine in hand. He frowns a bit at seeing that Wil already laid back down. “Wilbur.” He calls, Wil giving another groan. This one sounds more annoyed. “Wil, I’ve got medicine.”

“Medicine.” Tommy repeats, whispering loudly like it’s a big secret.

“Fantastic.” Wilbur drawls, words muffled against the pillow in his face. He ignores Techno kneeling down beside him. “I’ll get it in a bit.”

“Drink it right now. You can even have some water with it.” Techno coaxes, and Wil just grunts. Tommy hits Wilbur in the hip again with the cup. A bit of the water falls out, soaking into the blankets.

“Wil, Wil, Wil, Wil-” Tommy repeats, moving to hit Wilbur again with the cup.

“Tommy, you’re going to spill it all over him.” Techno warns. He turns his head to Wilbur. “Wilbur, sit up.”

Wilbur gives a response of what sounds like gibberish, half-lost against the fabric of his pillow. Technoblade raises his eyebrows.

“I have no idea what you just said.”

“He said he’s very tired and he wants to go to bed.” Tommy translates, somehow having deciphered that despite the fact Wil’s words were mostly incomprehensible. “You need better ears.” He points at Techno’s ears, the cup in his hands now tilting very precariously.

“Okay, you know what, give me that. Give it to me.” Techno says, confiscating the cup of water before Tommy really does spill it. Tommy pouts as he hands it over. “Wilbur, come on, get up.”

“No.” Wil says. Techno understands that one pretty clearly.

“He said no.” Tommy translates unnecessarily. Technoblade rolls his eyes.

The front door opens with Phil returning from the hallway. Techno turns his head towards the kitchen, expecting him to come right back into the living room so *he* can take over the job of dealing with a sick Wilbur, but Phil seems preoccupied with other tasks, such as looking through the basket of potatoes they brought down.

“Phil.” Technoblade calls, wanting very much to swap places with the man. He will take potatoes over a sick man any day. “Wil’s not taking his medicine.” He complains, and a split second after he says that, he realizes how awfully domestic it sounds.

He can hear Phil give a fond scoff from the kitchen. He still doesn’t come back into the living room. “Wilbur, listen to Techno.” He says, and *why* does that sound like he’s a scolding father? Technoblade doesn’t want to have this thought process. He’s going to start having *feelings*.

“No.” Wilbur mutters, and he practically tries to burrow himself further into his mess of blankets and pillows. Technoblade stares down at him with a vague urge to pour water over his head. He will not do that. Good hosts do not pour water on their guests' heads. Techno is a very good host.

“Here, Tommy, you give him the medicine.” Technoblade holds out the tiny cup, hoping to have the seven year old be more convincing towards the sick idiot so that he can retreat off into the kitchen with Phil. But Tommy leans away from his hand as soon as he reaches out, looking at it like it's diseased.

“No.” Tommy refuses, tilting his chin away. “You didn’t let me hold the water cup.” He says stubbornly. Techno blinks.

“Heh?” He leans back, holding the water up out instead. “Fine, you- you can have the cup, then. Just be careful with it.”

“No!” Tommy yells. He gets up from the floor with a stomp, all dramatics. “I don’t want it anymore.” He runs off towards the kitchen. “I’m going to go help Phil!”

“Wha- Hey! Tommy!” Technoblade calls, but that kid is not looking back, and Techno *swears* he can see him grinning as he runs away.

Ahg. He’s insufferable. Why did Techno take him in again?

He looks down at Wil, who’s shifted around to fall back to sleep, his face now partially showing and seeming much more at peace then a few minutes before. It’s very nearly endearing.

Technoblade frowns.

Feelings. He hates everything.

Tommy runs into the kitchen with a breathless laugh, almost bouncing on his feet as he turns around the corner to see Phil setting out the potatoes on the counter. Phil turns his head to him with a curious look.

“Hi, mate.” He greets, seeming almost wary.

“Hi. Techno said he’s gonna stay with Wilby.” Tommy responds, lying right through his teeth with a winning smile. “He also said I can come help.”

“Oh. Hm.” Phil hums. He doesn’t feel like Technoblade would be all that thrilled about staying with Wilbur, considering their rocky sort of relationship. This feels like a fib. But then again, he supposes nothing truly terrible could happen with the two of them just spending some time together. And Tommy does look rather excited to be in the kitchen.

Ah, it'll be fine. Techno and Wilbur needed some bonding time anyway. Him and Tommy can deal with the start of dinner on their own.

"Alright. Then why don't you pull two chairs over here and help me peel these potatoes?" Phil offers, and Tommy nods, going to do just that. He takes chairs from the table and drags them over to the counter, while Phil sets out a bin and finds two potato peelers.

Tommy stands on top of his chair to reach comfortably over the counter, and he leans forward on his palms with a happy noise, staring down at all the potatoes like he's their new conqueror. He pokes one and watches it turn. He keeps poking it, spinning it around in a circle with his finger. He giggles.

"Okay." Phil sits down with his knees nudging the bin in front of him, handing over the peeler. Tommy takes it with a focused look, sitting down as well. "You know how to peel potatoes?"

"Kinda." Tommy shrugs, grabbing a potato off the counter and holding it midair. "I peeled carrots once with Wilbur." But that was a long, long time ago.

"It's pretty much the same." Phil lightly grabs Tommy by the wrist, adjusting it so that he's holding the potato over the bin, so the shavings won't be falling all over the floor. "You've got to press the blade against the skin, and-- swipe." He takes Tommy's hand, pushing the peeler for him. A thin strip of potato skin falls away, landing into the bin below. "Watch where you put your hand, though. You don't want to peel yourself. It'll hurt." Phil warns, and Tommy nods.

"Have you peeled *your* hand before?" Tommy asks, trying his best to replicate what Phil did. His peeler skims across the top of the potato, not cutting anything.

"Once or twice." Phil answers, taking his own peeler and getting to work. "But it was a real little cut. It wasn't so bad."

"Still hurts." Tommy says. He sticks his tongue out in focus, pressing down hard with his peeler and trying his best to get the potato to cooperate with him. It just keeps skimming over

the skin without catching anything.

“Yeah, just a bit. It healed, though.” Phil nods. “You need help there?”

“No.” Tommy shakes his head, eyes narrowing with intense determination. He tries once, twice, and by the time he’s on his third try, Phil’s halfway done with his own potato. “I got this.” Tommy mutters. He does not get this.

“If you say so.” Phil smiles, focusing on his own peeler. The kid will get it eventually. He finishes his first potato and puts it to the side, grabbing another one as Tommy begins to hum almost aggressively.

“*Hmm.*” Tommy hums, holding his peeler midair for a second while glaring at the vegetable in his hand. “I don’t think this thing likes me.” He holds the potato out into Phil’s face. “I need another one!”

“Or maybe you just need a better starting spot. It’s hard to start it off.” Phil says, putting his own potato into his lap and taking Tommy’s. He peels off a bigger section, then gives it back. Tommy stares at it with a frown, holding it tightly in his palm. “Go on.” Phil encourages, and Tommy tries again. His face is set in such a stony focused look that it’s a drastic change when he lights up at finally cutting away a strip.

“I got it!” Tommy kicks his leg, hitting Phil lightly with his foot.

“You did.” Phil chuckles. “Now you got to do that to the rest of it, until there’s no brown left.”

“Okay, okay.” Tommy nods, and he begins to peel earnestly, very careful with not having his hand be in the way. He does not want to accidentally peel himself.

Phil huffs. It’s no wonder why Wilbur cares for Tommy so damn much. There’s something so overwhelmingly endearing about him, just in the way he’s so bright and energetic despite

everything. He's seven years old in the zombie apocalypse, and Phil would expect him to be a bit rougher for that. He would expect him to be a bit more scared, more frail, but he's still just a kid at heart. An impulsive, naive, brave kid.

He wonders how he'll grow up. In a base like this, with Techno and Phil keeping the hoard out of sight, maybe he'd get a chance to still have something of normalcy. Both him and Wil, they could still have something good, something with safety and love. If Phil can, he'd like to give it to them. He finds it's all he really wants, these days.

It's a good future. Although-

"Hey, Phil." Tommy says, pulling Phil out of his head. Phil pauses for a second with the motion of peeling.

"Yeah, mate?" Phil looks up.

Tommy picks at the lasting bits of skin on his potato. "Are you our dad now?"

Phil chokes. He nearly drops the peeler in his hand, and he coughs for a second as he puts it to the side, hitting a fist to his chest to catch his breath. "Uh- wha-" Phil stammers, and Tommy stares up at him with a patient look. "Well, that's- that's not entirely up to me...?"

"But you adopted Wil." Tommy nods, like that's just an obvious thing. Phil coughs again. "And we're brothers, so you have to adopt me too."

"I didn't adopt anyone." Phil waves a hand, sounding choked.

Tommy frowns. "But Wil calls you dad."

"Yeah, he-" Phil falters, not sure how to even begin explaining this. How does he bring up that entire experience of moving through the hoard? Of danger being at every turn, of Phil

trying to- *needing* to protect Wilbur whenever he could? How does he even *begin* to form words around the feelings that come with that whole journey? “He does.” He says, the words feeling too little. “I don’t know if that means I’m- I’m your dad, though.”

Tommy frowns further.

“I just- I don’t know if Wilbur even realizes he’s calling me that. He’s pretty sick, it could just be an accident.” Phil tries to explain. “And I...”

“But- if he’s saying it, then he thinks it.” Tommy reasons. “And you’re not telling him not to.”

“I’m-” Phil bites at the inside of his cheek. “I’m not.”

“Do you want to be our dad?” Tommy asks, like it’s so simple.

Phil’s heart squeezes. “Do you... want me to be?”

“I asked you first.” Tommy huffs, pulling his knees up to his chest, his feet poking over the edge of his chair.

“I asked you second.” Phil says back, giving a light smile. Tommy holds the peeler and his potato loosely in his hand, looking down at the bin between them.

“I dunno.” Tommy shrugs. “Yeah. Maybe.” He tilts his head to the side. “You’re nice. You care about Wil. You care about me. You care about Techno.” He smiles, his cheek resting against his knee. “We’re all one big happy family.”

Phil feels his breath swoop out of him, his chest feeling tight. “Yeah?” He says, for lack of any better words. He can’t think of anything better to say. He just kinda wants to coo at Tommy and cry over his life now. He sucks in a deep breath to steady himself.

“Yeah.” Tommy nods. He lifts his head. “Yeah! So, now you.”

Phil gives a questioning look.

“Do you want to be our dad?” Tommy asks again, still not having got his answer.

“Oh.” Phil blinks. “Well. Uhm.” He thinks for a moment. “I *do* care for Wil. I want him to be happy.”

“Me too.” Tommy adds on quickly, nodding for Phil to go on.

Phil grins. “And I do care for you and Techno. Techno’s an old friend, and Wilbur’s told me a lot about you.” Tommy presses his lips together, like he’s trying to not ask what exactly Wilbur’s said, because he wants Phil to finish. “I don’t know if that’s enough, but I wouldn’t... mind, being your dad. If that’s okay. If that’s what you want.”

“It is what I want.” Tommy nods. “It’s what Wilbur wants too, I think.” He stares off for a moment, like he’s thinking hard. “If you didn’t adopt Wilbur, and he still calls you dad, then Wil must’ve adopted you, so I have to adopt you too.” He says that like it’s just such simple knowledge, like it’s the most logical sort of thought process. “So now you’re adopted. Or I’m adopted. I think.”

“Alright.” Phil huffs.

“Okay.” Tommy says, blinking up at Phil with a warm smile. “Then do I call you dad? Instead of Phil?”

Phil opens and closes his mouth, nothing coming out for a few seconds. He struggles for a moment, before just nodding. “If that’s what you want, mate.” He chokes out.

“Okay. I’ll call you dad.” And Tommy shifts his attention back onto his potato, just like that. The moment passes, but Phil does not feel any more calm. He stares at Tommy’s face, seeing his tongue sticking out in focus again as he peels a potato. “But I’m still gonna call you Phil sometimes.” Tommy adds after a few long seconds, putting his mostly peeled potato on the counter. “Phillip.” He says, in a silly sounding voice.

Phil nods, feeling like all his words have been torn from his throat. He really wants to hug Tommy right now. He wants to hug Wilbur. He tries to focus on peeling these damn potatoes instead. “Alright.”

“Uh-huh.” Tommy nods, holding out a new potato to Phil so he can start off the peeling. Phil does so without a word, and when he hands it back, Tommy gets a new smile with an evil glint in his eyes.

“I want another older brother.” He says, and Phil freezes. “Can you adopt Techno next?”

Phil chokes again.

“Go ‘way.”

“Wilbur.”

“Away. Away.” Wil lifts a hand and waves it wildly through the air, like he’s trying to curse Techno’s existence. Technoblade just stares at him with a raised eyebrow. “Fuck off.”

“Yeah that’s great-- but I need you to take this medicine.” Techno repeats, nudging Wilbur in the side again, not allowing him to drift back to sleep. “Wil. Sit up.”

“No.” Wilbur huffs, purposely rolling over to show his back towards Techno. He curls up on his side, pulling a pillow over his head. “I’m laying down.”

“No, you’re sitting up.” Techno huffs.

“No.”

Techno sighs, leaning back. He gives a wistful look to the glass of water he had put down nearby. With each passing second, the thought of pouring that over Wil’s head looks more and more appealing. But Techno won’t do that. He’s a nice person. And Phil would be upset over that. Probably.

Although...

No. Technoblade is the master of self control. He turns his attention back onto Wilbur.

Here is Tommy’s pride and joy, the same guy that kid has chatted about non-stop for weeks on end. The same brother that Techno’s heard so much about to the point that he felt as if he already met him. He knows Wilbur’s habits. He knows Wilbur’s favorite foods. He even knows Wilbur’s favorite color, because Tommy is a clingy seven year old who’s favorite topic is his older brother and *geez*, Techno did not realize how much this would impact his perspective on the guy.

Technoblade is entirely a stranger to Wilbur. He knows this well. They have no history with each other, they have no trust. Sure, they’ve got mutual companions, but that doesn’t wash away the hesitancy. And- Techno understands hesitancy. Wilbur doesn’t trust him, that’s fine. Wilbur doesn’t particularly like him, that’s fine too. Techno relates.

But.

Even with that, even with Techno knowing the reasons why Wilbur is a bit colder to him than with Phil and Tommy-- he can’t help but *want* some sort of trust.

Because here's the thing. It is hard to not admire a person when your first impression of them is one that's made through the pure endless devotion of a seven year old. Tommy loves Wil. He loves him more than anything in the world, that's incredibly apparent. And that-

Techno groans, leaning his face against his palm.

That rubbed off.

Technoblade knows Wilbur. He knows that sometimes he sings Tommy to sleep, he knows that he gives the best hugs. He knows that Wil likes to dance in the rain and he likes to whistle to the birds and he likes to sit near the fire at night. He knows that Wilbur doesn't like yelling, and he knows that Wilbur hates traveling without a group and he knows-

"Wilbur." Techno says again, endlessly patient and unfortunately, attached. "I swear I'm going to hit you with a pillow if you don't sit up in the next minute."

"Fuck you." Wilbur mutters back, the words lacking any heat to be truly offensive. He just sounds tired. "Where's d- Phil?" He turns his head, lowering the pillow from his head.

Technoblade hums. "Dad's in the kitchen. With Tommy." He means to say that as a sort of tease, but it just comes out quiet. Wilbur rolls onto his back, closing his eyes with a huff. "They're peeling potatoes, I think."

"Good for them." Wilbur murmurs, then he cracks his eyes open to look up at Techno. "Go away."

"Do you have a grudge against me? Have I crossed you at some point? Because I do not remember your face." Techno asks, a bit sarcastic. "I feel like I would remember you if I wronged you in some sort of way."

“It was more like a- indirect wronging.” Wil says, and Technoblade sits up straight at getting an honest answer. “With Tommy.”

Technoblade shakes his head, just barely. “I’ve only taken care of Tommy. I haven’t done anything to him.”

Wilbur scoffs lightly. “No. But you traded supplies for him. You took him.”

Oh.

There is suddenly something sharp in Wilbur’s eyes. A quiet sort of anger that is somehow still effective even while he’s sick looking. Technoblade has a moment of wonder for just how protective a brother can become while stuck in a zombie apocalypse.

He nods, slowly. “That was- for good reason. I don’t think his group was the best equipped at raising a kid. Especially since they *took* the supplies.” He defends, and Wilbur’s stare only seems to grow colder.

“Still. At least I knew *them*. At least then he wasn’t with some- blood god motherfucker-” Wilbur mutters, his voice trailing off into nothing. Techno shifts where he’s sitting with a hesitant face. “I didn’t know you. I still don’t. All I know is Phil likes you, and that’s something, but-” He stops, holding a hand over his face.

“But you still don’t want to trust me?” Techno offers. Wilbur peeks out past his fingers, and the sharpness in his look is gone. It’s replaced with something nearly scared. “That’s reasonable. I guess it makes sense. I’m a stranger. I had your brother for a while. You didn’t know if he was safe.” He shrugs. “If I was in your place, I wouldn’t be so warm towards his supposed captor either.”

“What *would* you do? If you were in my place.”

Technoblade pauses.

If Tommy was his brother, his little brother who he had been protecting this entire time through life and death, and he found out someone took him- *stole* him, with supplies as a bribe-

“I’d probably kill the guy responsible.” Techno says honestly, and he realizes that probably seems unhinged. “Or, y’know. Maim him. Injure him. Uh.” He’s not making it sound any better.

Wilbur laughs. He turns on his side again, facing towards Techno. “That’s reassuring.” He sighs. “I want to be angry at you for taking Tommy. Because it was just- ugh, it was fucking horrible with all the stress of not knowing if he was okay, but then again... if you were taking him in with a place like this-” He waves a hand up at the apartment, at everything, at a place that looks like a home, despite the world outside. “-then he really was just better off.”

Technoblade glances up at the place around him. It’s hard to remember that life out there is so much more miserable than here, where he’s made a life for himself.

“I tried my best.” He says, wanting to somewhat calm down Wilbur’s past worries. “He’s an interesting kid.”

Wilbur lifts his gaze to Techno, staring at him for a moment. His eyes open and close again and again, and he seems seconds from falling back to sleep. Just as Techno’s about to call his name again, he says-

“You love him.”

Technoblade goes still. Wilbur breathes out in something like a light laugh, amused.

“It’s not surprising. It’s hard not to. He’s so-” Wilbur lifts a hand, shaking his head. “He’s *Tommy*.” He says the name with so much adoration, like Tommy is the best thing that’s ever happened in his life. “I’m glad you care for him. He’s a good kid. He’s so good.”

Techno opens his mouth, trying to say something.

“But- Technoblade.” Wilbur reaches up, grabbing onto the edge of his shirt. In a snap, that sharp look is back, burning hot with a threat. “If you *ever* hurt him in any way, I’ll kill you.”

Techno closes his mouth. He nods.

Wil nods back, and he lets go of Techno’s shirt, before then dropping his head into the blankets and promptly passing out. Technoblade narrows his eyes at his sleeping face with an exasperated look.

“Okay.” He murmurs, somehow not at all put off by the death threat. Maybe it was because Techno understands the need to keep Tommy safe. Maybe it’s because Wilbur still looks like a sickly mess. But either way, there’s something of companionship settling over his heart, and he just carefully holds the cup of medicine in his hands, sighing out. “Just sleep, Wil. I’ll give you your medicine when you wake up.”

And with that, he stays there at Wil’s side, enjoying the quiet noise of Phil and Tommy’s voices from the kitchen, and Wilbur’s gentle snores from underneath him.

Chapter End Notes

We have two spectrums in this chapter.

Tommy, the family dynamic enthusiast: and so now I have a dad and I have a brother and I want TWO brothers so I will have two brothers and this is great-

And Techno, the "what do you mean I have feelings": oh god the child radiated so much brotherly love that now I'm INFECTED oh NO I care about this SICK IDIOT

fambly. they are fambly. can't wait for Wilbur to recover and jump onto the family dynamics and then for everyone to turn on Techno and drag him kicking and screaming

into the family dynamics as well. Love to see it. I'm thriving. And also sleepy. I will now go pass out. Huzzah

leaf comment?? thank

scrunkly boy he's a scrunkly scronkle

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Wilbur doesn't quite dream, but he sure as hell doesn't wake up either.

He snoozes, more like. Floats in a weird state where occasionally he can hear the world around him, and feel the blankets brushing against his skin. Voices blend in and out against his ears, and his dreams drift too often to be anything solid. Time passes strangely, and his thoughts feel warped. Everything is as if it's underwater, muffled and barely kept in sight.

It takes him too long to notice that someone's knee is pressing into his side. It's not in any malicious manner, thankfully, it's not trying to pin him down or put a bruise into his skin, they're just- sitting a tad bit too close by accident, perhaps. Pushing into his side like a constant reminder that he's not sleeping alone.

It reminds him of Phil. Of the way Phil always let himself half-lean onto Wilbur whenever they slept, the two of them taking turns to keep watch. Staying close is a good habit when needing to be on guard. Wilbur is familiar with it.

So is that knee Phil's?

Something in his head says no. He *wants* it to be Phil, wants the same safety that he knows well, but wanting and having are two different things. This is not Phil beside him.

Wilbur should nudge them away then. Stranger danger, and all that jazz. He oughta kick them away and move somewhere better. Except...he's pretty comfortable where he is. He's in a nice spot, not too cold and not too warm. Able to somewhat breathe through his clogged nostrils. His bed is soft and the world is calm. Things feel alright.

The knee can stay then, whatever. As long as it doesn't hit into his precious ribcage anytime soon. He hates when people do that. It always makes it hard to suck in air, and air is crucial when you're fighting for your life. Wilbur's not a good fighter in general, he doesn't appreciate drawbacks.

He sleeps on, slightly annoyed over the logistics of fighting other dangerous people. Words wash over his ears for a moment, just clear enough to make it out.

He hears an amused snort. It's familiar.

"Is he sleeping?" Oh, it's Phil. Yay, Phil. Wilbur likes Phil, he's like a dad to him. He *is* a dad. The Dad.

"Unfortunately." Someone answers, and that's the person with the *knee*.

Unfamiliar. A stranger? God, they're too close, then. What if Wilbur gets fucking shanked in his sleep? Maybe that's what they're planning to do. Maybe that's why they're sitting so close.

But Phil's here. Phil wouldn't let that happen.

Wilbur supposes it'll be fine, then. He's alright with Phil near, but the knee person is on thin ice.

"You were supposed to get him to take his medicine, mate."

"Oh, I tried." A long sigh. "I can see where Tommy gets his stubbornness from."

Tommy. *Tommy*. Wilbur was supposed to be watching over him, keeping him safe. Where's his little brother? His loud, bright sunshine? Fuck, he has to figure out where he is. He has to fix this clear problem.

He flutters his eyelids open for a second, wanting to try and check around. To try and find his Tommy. But then the world is too bright against his eyes, blinding, and Wilbur retreats underneath the pain of a headache. No doing that. He wants to sleep.

Surely Tommy's okay. Phil would wake him up if not, wouldn't he?

Yeah. So Tommy must be safe. Wilbur can sleep, can't he?

"Maybe he needs the rest." Phil is talking again, but it's fading off. Wilbur loses the words. "After dinner he could..."

He sleeps. Time pulls away.

He comes back to the sound of *Tommy*.

"-he's going to be cold, and then he's going to be more sick, and then it's going to be your fault, and you will get no dinner!" He sounds determined. That's his Tommy. Go, Tommy, go. Achieve whatever your little heart desires.

"I think Phil would have something to say against withholding food from me." The knee person responds. He's talking much more quietly than Tommy. He sounds...fond. "Here, look. I'll put a blanket over him."

They shift closer to Wil. Something is laid over his shoulders, thick and warm. A blanket. Nice.

"No!" Tommy yells, and Wilbur's lips twitch into a hint of a frown. Too loud. "That's not good enough! He's going to be cold!"

“Shhh. You’ll wake him up.”

Tommy speaks a bit more quietly. Wilbur stretches his fingers out into the blanket underneath him with a hum. “He needs hugs, Technoblade. Big ones.”

Technoblade.

Ah, so that’s who the knee person is. Wilbur feels like he should’ve known that. That seemed kinda obvious. But then again, his fuzzy brain is currently shoving down much of his coherent thought in favor of being vaguely unconscious. It’s a little hard to think. The world is still swimming underwater.

“I’m not hugging him again, that was a one time thing.”

“Make it two time. Three.”

“One time thing.” Techno repeats. “You can hug him, if you want him to have hugs so bad.”

“But I’m helping Phil with dinner.” Tommy whines, making a disappointed noise that hurts Wilbur right in the center of his chest. Ow, ow, ow. Sad baby brother. That needs to be fixed, someone make the baby brother happy again. Quickly. “And you have bigger arms.”

“Tommy-”

“Pleaseeeee-”

“Tom-”

“ *Pleaseeeee* -!”

“Okay, okay, look-” A shuffle of weight settles beside Wilbur. “I’ll lay down next to him. There. I’m keeping him company.”

“But you’re not *hugging* him.” Tommy huffs. Wilbur knows that huff well. He can vividly imagine the expression that’s going with it. Dramatic frown, scrunched nose, eyebrows furrowed together with an upset look in his eyes. Uh-huh, the wonderful look of a frustrated seven year old. Wilbur loves him so much.

“Why do you want me to hug him so bad?”

“Hmm. Because-”

“Tommy!” Dad calls, sounding like he’s in another room. “Are you gonna come help, mate? Or are you going to swap with Techno?”

“We can swap-”

“No! You hug Wil. Or no dinner.”

A pause. The dragged on silence feels tense. Wilbur nearly falls back to sleep.

“I’m telling Phil you’re getting no dinner.” Tommy mutters earnestly, and then he leaves, quickly making Wilbur lose any last interest in the world around him. No Tommy? Well, then what’s the point?

There’s a short huff next to him. Techno.

“You’re not even cold, are you?” He asks, like Wilbur can respond. “He’s just being insufferable for no reason.”

Wilbur isn't cold, that's true. Hard to be, with the blanket on his shoulders. It's pretty warm.

A hand adjusts it to sit further past his shoulders, and Wilbur lets himself drift back to sleep with the knowledge that Tommy is safe and Techno exists in a nearby vicinity.

Time passes in a blink, yet drags on for what seems like hours. When Wilbur cracks his eyes open, it's to the feeling of someone tugging at his hair.

Or, no, they're not tugging, they're brushing through it. Braiding it?

Oh, then it must be dad. Dad's braiding his hair again.

He sleeps.

Techno's voice hovers over his head, and Tommy's voice mixes with it, the two of them talking as softly as they can, with Wilbur still resting. Wil can't catch onto their words. He hears Tommy laugh.

He sleeps.

Dad's talking, now. He's talking with Techno, but both their voices are faint, like they're somewhere far. Something wet is pushing against his hand. It feels like a snout.

A dog? The Dog. What was his name? Fluff? Wilbur doesn't know. Tommy liked it, though.

He squeezes his eyes shut to fall back to sleep. Ignores The Dog.

A few seconds pass.

The world is quiet, then it's not.

"Wil." Dad calls. He's whispering. "Wilbur, wake up."

There's a hand gently shaking him. The blanket on him has traveled down to rest over his chest now, rather than over his shoulders. Wilbur groans quietly, his throat feeling rough.

"C'mon, mate." Dad persists, and Wilbur forces his eyes open. He's rewarded with a pleased noise. "There we are. Hello. Dinner's ready."

"Mhn?" Wilbur squints at him in confusion. He tilts his head up, his limbs feeling stiff and warm. Where's Tommy?

Phil laughs lightly. "Dinner's done." He repeats. "Me and Tommy made it. With some help from Techno. You think you can eat right now?"

Wilbur blinks. Processes the words slowly. Then he nods. "Sure." He croaks out. He sits up, with some help from Phil. Everything feels sore. Slow. It's a bad state to be in, during the apocalypse, but Wilbur strangely feels as if he's going to be just fine.

"You want to move to the kitchen or eat here?" Phil asks.

Wilbur flexes his fingers from where they lay in his lap. He yawns, long and drawn out before answering. "Kitchen." He says. If he stays here, he's going to become one with all these blankets. He needs to *move*.

"Alright, let's go." Phil nods. He holds a hand out, and Wilbur takes it without hesitation, letting himself be pulled up onto his feet. The world sways. He slumps into Phil. "Oh boy. You sure?" Phil checks in, looking worried.

Wilbur nods, shaking his head a bit more than needed. He stands up taller. Stretches out his limbs. The dizziness has now passed, but he doesn't protest against Phil keeping an arm around him as they move along.

Tommy and Technoblade are sitting in the kitchen. They're eating at the table, with bowls and plates of steaming food in front of them, along with a small pile of napkins, a burnt out candle, and a platter of what looks to be-

"Is that *bread*?" Wilbur mutters, caught in a sort of awe. Tommy's head snaps towards him, his eyes wide. His face lights up with joy, then immediately sours.

"You should be resting!" Tommy scolds, dropping his spoon back into his bowl. Technoblade goes to get up from his seat as Phil nudges Wilbur to sit down beside Tommy.

"Techno, I got it." Phil waves him off, trying to get him to sit again. "I can serve us both." And he walks over to the stove, grabbing two bowls and doing just that.

"You can have my seat?" Techno offers, still on his feet. He seems out of place for a moment, faltering, before going to look for something in a nearby cabinet. "There's only three chairs, so I could-"

"I'm not taking your seat." Phil insists. "You're already eating."

"I can move." Techno offers again. "I'll just stand by the counter-"

"You are *not* standing by the counter-"

Tommy ignores their tiny argument. He stays focused on Wilbur, because clearly Wilbur is what matters here. He jabs his finger towards his brother, poking him in the arm.

“You are supposed to be getting better.” He says, like Wilbur is betraying him and is actively staying sick.

Wilbur scoffs. His eyes are drawn towards the bread, which looks...fresh. He reaches out to rip a piece off, and is incredibly surprised when it's not stale. “I am getting better.” He tells Tommy, a bit distracted by the food. “Did Phil bake this?” He asks, holding the bread up, not sure if he should eat it.

“No.” Tommy goes to grab a piece of his own. He shoves it into his mouth, chewing while answering. “Techno did.”

Ah. Wilbur doesn't know how to feel about that. He stares at his torn bread, then flinches as Tommy kicks his foot from underneath the table.

“You didn't even take your medicine earlier.” Tommy says, keeping them on topic. “You fell asleep.”

“I was tired.” Wilbur defends.

“Yeah, and you still are.” Tommy picks up his spoon again, stirring through his food. “Me and Phil gave your hair a makeover while you were asleep, and you haven't even noticed.”

Wilbur immediately brings his hands up to his hair, slapping his palms against his scalp. He can feel tiny braids sticking out in drastically different directions, his untouched curls pleasantly untangled. He tries to brush it back so it won't be so wild looking. Tommy gives him a happy little grin from behind his spoon. That little shit.

Tommy then turns to look behind him, right at where Phil and Techno are still bickering over the last seat left. “Techno, come sit down!” He yells, and there, the decision is made. Everyone must listen to the child's demands.

Technoblade opens his mouth like he means to protest, but Phil just pokes him in the side, looking smug. Techno bats him off with a slight huff, handing over a bottle of medicine to Phil before returning to the table. Tommy looks happy as can be with his presence.

Wilbur soaks in the joy radiating off his little brother for a moment, then pulls his attention away as Phil places a bowl of food and a tiny cup of medicine in front of Wil.

“You better take your medicine this time.” Technoblade says, sounding exasperated, yet still smiling. “You passed out before I could give it to you.”

“Yeah, Tommy told me.” Wilbur says, looking down at the food with a sense of wonder. It’s steaming hot, and it looks better than anything Wil’s been eating these past weeks. It’s not out of a wrapper, or straight out of a can. It’s made on an actual stove, in a metal pot, in a *kitchen*. The bowl it’s kept in is clean, no scratch marks or dirt to be seen. It looks normal, a dinner table all set up and ready for a family.

Domestic is the word that comes to Wilbur’s mind. He’s hesitant to even take it in, lest it somehow goes to shit and bursts into spontaneous flames of some sort.

Is this how they will live? He wonders. Homemade cooking made within a clean, well-kept kitchen, every day, that’s a dream. An unrealistic dream, but here it is regardless. Wilbur has it.

He scrunches his nose with the feeling of fatigue trying to crawl up his back again, and he reaches for the tiny cup of medicine sitting in front of him. Phil nudges at his shoulder.

“Eat your food first.” He suggests. “Medicine after. You need a full stomach.”

Wilbur pauses, but pulls his hand back. He goes still as Phil lightly tugs at his hair, and after a second, he realizes the man must’ve been trying to settle down a funny looking braid. He pats at his hair for a second time, face feeling warm. Tommy giggles, and he hides his face into his spoon when Wilbur give a warning look his way.

Phil goes to lean against the kitchen counter, picking up his own meal and eating it there on his feet. Technoblade gives him a considering look, nearly pleading, and Phil taps his spoon against his own bowl within his hands, like a reminder to finish his own portion before thinking about getting up. Techno turns back to his food to keep eating, a bit faster than before.

Wilbur stares at his food, then turns to look at Phil. He *really* looks at him.

He takes in the way his clothes seem to fit loosely, and the way bandages wrap around his arms and hands, to keep his past injuries from getting any worse while they heal. He looks at the way his fingertips finally seem clean, and the way his hair sits loose and untangled over his shoulders. He's missing his hat. Wilbur wonders where he put it.

"Wait." Wilbur says, raising his head, now remembering something. "Don't you still have a chunk of your leg missing?" He glances down at Phil's ankle, squinting suspiciously.

Phil freezes mid-bite. He looks as if he forgot that fact himself. "Uh-"

Techno's chair screeches as it's pushed from him suddenly standing up. "That's it, you're taking my seat-"

"*Wilbur* -" Phil sighs, Wilbur laughing lightly as Phil gets manhandled into a chair.

"You're the one standing while injured." Wilbur defends, picking up his spoon from the table.

"I can't believe I didn't remember your leg, it was literally one of the first things I wrapped- we're checking that after dinner. I'm rewrapping it." Techno points a stern finger at Phil's leg, hovering over his shoulder, and Phil flips him off with a grin.

"But now you're not sitting!" Tommy points out, clearly unhappy with this change in the seating chart. "We need another chair."

“We need a bigger table.” Techno responds, staring at all the food piled together. “I’ll get something worked out later. I’ve never needed this much space before...” He trails off, looking thoughtful.

“We’ll figure it out.” Phil takes Techno’s plate from in front of him and lifts it up towards Technoblade. “Here.”

Techno takes it with a thanks. Wilbur watches him stay standing beside Phil, leaning a little against his chair, and he jolts as a foot whacks him right in the shin. He looks at Tommy.

“Food.” Tommy whispers, pointing aggressively towards Wilbur’s own portion.

“Yes, yes.” Wilbur relents, and he goes to eat what he can, not at all expecting much.

He swears he nearly tears up at the first bite. It’s *warm*. It’s not bland or cold or bitter, it’s warm and seasoned and well-made. He can taste potatoes and spices mixed together, and while it’s not the best meal in the world, it’s the first good dinner he’s had in-

Fuck, when was the last time he had a normal dinner? He can’t remember.

He eats the bread he grabbed before, and is surprised all over again at the fact it’s not at all stale. It’s soft, not tough, and it’s a little sweet. It reminds him so heavily of before, before all the shit went down, before the world turned into something unforgiving.

It’s like Wilbur is back there again, young and alone in his home, taking care of his little brother while his parents are off doing who knows what. There’s no threat of zombies or other survivors, just the threat of boredom and the struggle of taking care of a six year old.

Something brushes against his ankles as he eats, and Wilbur checks under the table to find the dog sniffing around, trying to get whatever scraps that might fall off the table. He watches as

Phil sneaks a piece of bread down, and while the dog does take it, he doesn't stick around to thank Phil for it. Phil's only slightly disappointed.

After a comfortable while of silence, save for the clinking of bowls and a light humming from Phil, Wilbur finds himself full.

But there's still some food left.

He's got a half eaten roll of bread in his hand, a second one he grabbed after the first one. While his bowl is considerably lower than before, it's not exactly empty. He stares down at it with a sinking type of dread, his gut instinct telling him to not waste the food since he'll need it desperately later.

"Wil?" Phil calls, and Wilbur snaps his head up, caught in the middle of being still for too long. "You done, mate?"

"Uh." Wilbur glances down at his plate, and Technoblade puts down his own bowl at that moment, himself having finished every single bite. He circles around the table, leaving Phil's side, and Wil feels that sense of safety and nostalgia from before slowly seeping away. He's filled with a quiet anxiety as Techno stands beside him instead, and takes his plate to get a closer look.

He turns it to the side, taking view of what's left. Wilbur abandons the bread he's got left on the table, a confession out in the open. Part of him wants to finish it, honestly, but he's not sure he could. On one hand, he's already quite full, and pushing it comes with the risk of losing it all together, which isn't safe. On the other hand, keeping leftovers is a habit for him. It's always good to keep food on hand, so he can't bring himself to have it finish entirely.

"Huh." Techno frowns, and he lets go of Wilbur's food. "Question."

Tommy lifts his chin up at Techno, looking back and forth between him and Wilbur.

“How long have you been living on the move out there?” Technoblade asks, directly at Wilbur alone. Wilbur blinks, then opens his mouth to answer, then pauses. How long has it been? Suddenly, he’s not too sure. It’s been months. The last town does count as settling, but that wasn’t a long term thing. And he and Tommy used to travel on foot before that, as well. Should he count that in? Or should he count it from the day the town burnt to ashes?

“A long ass time.” Tommy answers for him, and Technoblade rolls his eyes.

“I’m asking Wilbur, Tommy.”

“He’s not wrong.” Wilbur shrugs, and Techno’s frown goes a little thin.

“Alright. I’ll keep that in mind.” He says, moving both his and Wilbur’s plate off the table and into the sink instead.

“Wait, why?” Wilbur asks, leaning out of his chair.

“Food portion.” Techno says simply. “I don’t know how much you guys ate while out there, but it can’t have been enough, considering...” He makes a vague gesture at the entirety of Wil.

Wilbur blinks. Frowns. “What the fuck does *that* imply?”

“I’ve been feeding him what I could while we were together.” Phil tells Techno, stirring his spoon in thought. “Although. It did get a bit difficult when we were directly *in* the hoard.”

“It was manageable.” Wilbur reassures, and Phil makes a face.

“But not ideal.” Phil responds. “And you were a bit too skinny when I met you. Still are?” He speaks carefully.

“That’s-” Wilbur glances down at himself. He’s not that worn down, is he? He’s gotten his food. He doesn’t outright starve that often.

(But then again, was there ever enough to really be full, while on the move? He used to always give part of his rations to Tommy, every day without fail. He never thought it to be a big deal, because keeping his brother fed was his main priority, but now-

Now he realizes that might’ve resulted in consequences.)

“I’ll just keep it in mind for dinner from now on.” Techno shrugs, not too concerned. “Don’t over eat, but get a snack whenever you want. Tommy can tell you where most of it is.”

“We have peaches and beans and noodles and-” Tommy lists off, clearly happy with the thought of giving it all to Wilbur. “ *Carrots* .” He finishes, sounding bitter.

“Carrots.” Wilbur repeats.

“You can have all of those.” Tommy sniffs, not at all elaborating over his apparent grudge towards the orange vegetable.

“What he said.” Techno nods, putting the dishes in the sink, then going over to put a bottle of water on the table in front of Wil. He drags Wil’s tiny cup of medicine close to him, then nudges at his shoulder like a stern reminder. “Actually drink your medicine this time.”

Wilbur stares down at the tiny cup. He feels something unwind within his chest, and as he reaches for the bottle of water, he can see Phil smiling at him from his side of the table.

Again, he feels a slight hint of nostalgia.

Only difference is, now he's not alone. It's not just him and Tommy anymore.

He thinks he could get used to that.

Ever since the apocalypse broke out, Wilbur's gotten used to sleeping in strange spots, and being a pillow while doing it.

Sometimes, there aren't always beds when they're traveling across the road, needing to rest for the night. Sometimes, all he has is the concrete ground, and his body is the only thing he can use as a cushion so Tommy can sleep soundly.

For tonight, Wilbur's sleeping spot isn't exactly bad. In fact, it's good. Really good.

It's comfortable, and Tommy even has his own proper pillow to rest his head upon. They both have blankets, multiple of them. They have lights, and safety, and peace and quiet within a building with sturdy walls.

But it's weird.

Don't get him wrong, Wilbur's glad for it all. It's a good change. Phil and Techno rest beside him and Tommy, so it's safe. He's bundled up underneath layers of blankets, so he's warm. He's fed and watered and all that stuff that's necessary for survival, so he's comfortable, but it's *weird*.

The room is dim against his eyes. There's candles lit up around the living room, courtesy of Phil lighting them when the sun began to go down. It's not dark, not in that way that makes Wilbur's lungs feel too tight and his heart kick into overdrive, but-

Something is just wrong. Off.

He turns his head to the side, staring at Tommy sleeping away beside him. He's cuddling up against Wilbur's side, his plush cow held tight in his arms. He looks so sweet like that, dressed in soft clothes and wrapped up in comfy blankets. He looks like a proper kid, having a sleepover in the living room.

Wilbur savors the sight. That's clearly not what is bothering him.

He looks to his other side, where someone else is sleeping beside him, at the insistence of Tommy, of course.

Technoblade. He's laying with his back against Wil, so Wilbur can't see his face. He also can't see Phil, because Phil's taken up a spot beside Techno tonight, once again.

Wilbur gives a short sigh, dropping his head into his pillow and staring up at the ceiling. There's something tight tangled up underneath his ribs, and he's not sure what it is. He can't quite get rid of it, no matter how much he reminds himself of everything he's got around him.

They're in a secure base. Wilbur's got one, maybe two, reliable people right beside him if anything were to go wrong. The night is quiet and his bed is soft. Everyone is asleep.

Except for him.

He makes a tiny groan, careful to not wake up his little brother. The worst part is that he actually feels fairly fine. He's not being hit with the mother of all headaches, and he's not having his stomach churn with nausea. He's just kinda tired, with a slight ache wanting to stick to his skin.

He shifts the blanket on top of him off of his chest, wanting to be rid of the warmth that's beginning to be a bit too much. Slowly, he sits up from the ground, and hunches over with a slow breath, eyes drifting to the candles placed around the room. He counts them out, just to have something to do.

One. Two. Three. Four-

The body next to him shifts, turning over. Wilbur goes still, and loses his count, regardless of how low it was. He looks with wide eyes at Technoblade, heart picking up pace, and then he relaxes when Techno finally goes still. Ah, he was probably just switching sides in his sleep.

He glances up at Techno's face, now finally able to see it properly.

Techno's eyes stare back, very much not asleep.

Wilbur thinks his heart quite literally jolts out of place for a second. He bites down on his tongue.

Technoblade raises his eyebrows in a silent question at him, and after a moment of just staring with a quiet tension, he sits up too so that he can join Wilbur in not sleeping during this nice night.

"Sorry." Wilbur whispers, guilt sliding down his shoulders and settling into the curve of his spine. "I couldn't sleep."

"Hm." Is all Techno gives as a response, yawning wide and stretching his arms up. He looks at Tommy. A slow smile creeps across his face at the way the kid is entirely knocked out.

Wilbur shares the same sentiment. He lets himself smile with Techno for a bit, glad to at least have this one thing in common: loving Tommy.

"Why couldn't you sleep?" Techno asks softly, after a minute or so. It catches Wilbur off guard, and he flinches with the sudden question.

“Uhm. I don’t know, actually.” He shrugs, being sure to keep his voice quiet. “I just can’t.”

Techno shrugs. “Makes sense. You did sleep off a lot of the day. Maybe your body is done with the whole sleeping thing.”

Wilbur shakes his head, not in agreement. “I’m still *tired* , but I just-” He throws his hands up. “It just doesn’t feel right.”

Techno tilts his head, leaning back on his palms. “How so?”

Wilbur huffs. “I don’t know.” And how it pisses him off to no end, not being able to word it right. He’s not even sure what exactly is sitting in his chest right now. Nervousness? Worry? Plain old symptoms of being ill? “I don’t *know*. ”

Techno hums, long and drawn out, like he’s sifting through his own thoughts while trying to shake off his drowsiness. His head tilts back over his shoulders, and he stares up at the ceiling, another yawn finding its way out from his throat. Wilbur copies the yawn not a minute later, covering his mouth with his hand.

They sit there in a near awkward silence, Phil and Tommy sleeping away being none the wiser.

Then, Technoblade seems to get an idea. He sits up a bit straighter, and then glances at the walls of the living room, where he still has his weapons hanging up.

“Alright.” He murmurs, before pushing himself to his feet and leaving the bed of blankets on the ground. Wilbur watches him walk off into the hall, right into the dark. He feels compelled to follow, but he doesn’t really want to stand.

There’s no need, anyway. Techno returns not too long after, and there’s something long held in his hands. A stick, maybe? Wilbur squints, trying to make it out in the shadows, and then Techno comes into the dim light of the living room, and he realizes it’s a fucking *sword*.

“What.” Wilbur blanks. “-is that.” He knows what it is. The question he’s really asking is why Techno thought a metal blade was going to be the answer to his sleeping problem.

“A weapon.” Techno answers, sitting back down in his spot with a quiet grunt. He gets comfortable where he is, but doesn’t lay back down. Instead, he seems ready to stay sitting upright. “My go-to weapon, to be exact. Guns are great and all, but they’re too loud, and they need ammo. This doesn’t.” He pats at the sword laying across his lap, and Wilbur stares at it with a look of bafflement.

“Huh.” He’s got a point there. A sword does seem more practical, in a zombie apocalypse. Ammo can become sparse, and noise can mean death. “But why do you have it?”

“To keep watch.” Technoblade says simply.

Wilbur makes a face. “What?”

“I’m keeping watch.” He repeats, and he shifts again, closer to Phil. He looks at his friend for a few long seconds, then turns back to Wilbur. “You go to sleep, and I’ll stay up right here, keeping an eye out.”

He says it like it’s the easiest option that makes the most sense. Like it’s the most obvious answer being offered. In a way, it is.

Wilbur is used to being on the road. He’s used to zombies being right outside his door, to the danger of night meaning possible death. He’s used to sleeping lightly, with eyes always keeping a watch out in case something goes south. He’s used to danger being dug into all his scars, no matter what.

Techno can’t convince a man in one day that his base is truly safe. After all, there’s still that horde outside, and while that’s not really a concern in his eyes, Wilbur is a different story. A different perspective. The only thing he can do is keep the routine he knows, because that’s the routine he works by.

It's a little tedious, but it's not in waste. Keeping Wilbur well-rested is pretty darn important, if anything.

At the moment, as far as Techno is concerned, Wilbur is the priority. Not Phil, who's already healing up with freshly changed bandages. Not Tommy, who's comfortable and happy with his little stuffed cow. Wilbur. Wil, who's still sick, still a little pale in the dim candle light. Wilbur, who, despite everything so far, the food, the safety, the company, still has an ever present tension sticking to his shoulders.

"You can't stay up all night." Wilbur protests, leaning forward.

Techno shrugs. He fiddles with the handle of his sword.

"At least let us take turns."

Technoblade holds back his lips from twitching into a smile. There's the habit, right there, in the open. There's no point of keeping watch. Techno doesn't need it, he knows he's safe. This is for Wilbur's sake.

But, if agreeing will make this all go faster...

"Sure. I'll wake you up in a few hours, then we can switch."

Wilbur nods, his shoulders dropping down just barely. "Right. That sounds good."

Techno nods back. He gestures at Wilbur's pillow. "Knock yourself out, then."

Wilbur looks at his spot, then gets distracted and looks at Tommy. He smiles, then nods again, a second time. He lays back down in the spot he was before, and Techno leans forward

with his elbows on his knees, a short silent sigh coming from his mouth.

A minute passes. Two. Three. Techno loses count.

Wilbur falls to sleep eventually. He goes limp and snores softly into the air, and Techno still takes watch even then, just for a little while more.

Only when he's absolutely sure that Wilbur is sound asleep, does he put the sword to the side and lay down himself. He goes to bed and passes out within minutes.

Chapter End Notes

Wilbur: I will now settle into this base with my little brother

Also Wilbur: I do not know how to live like a normal human being what do you mean we aren't on survival mode anymore of course we are, it's the apocalypse

sumw! Wilbur is a tired scrunkly. All of sbi are survivors, but Wilbur is like the worst out all of them ngl. Phil has immunity, so that's just a whole advantage against zombies + he's got a gun and he will use it. Techno is Technoblade, Blood God, man who mowed down zombies for the hell of it. Tommy is a Child, so he gets taken care of by all the adults around him. Automatic safety in groups.

Wilbur? He is a survivor dude who's BARELY getting by most of the time. He is tired. He is hungry. Thankfully, he now has three family members who will make sure he doesn't starve anytime soon

Him and Techno are like direct opposites ngl. Techno? Well-fed. Relaxed. Kill zombies like they're flies. Wilbur? Probably half starved. Very stressed. Is rightfully scared of zombies. They're twins ur honor. blspsbskflsjfan

Also

I love family dynamics. boo yah. thanks for reading. Leave a comment to sponsor the next chap weeeee

Wilbur: lads this is NOT a pogchamp moment-- lads stop pogchamping-- LADS-

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

A week goes by with Wilbur staying sick.

Needless to say, he is entirely miserable throughout it.

Fatigue has taken its chance to screw him over, and it's not pulling *any* punches at all. He wakes up tired most of the time, with a headache trying to carve its way into his skull and his limbs feeling heavier than he could've ever imagined. The air around him is too cold, then it's too hot, then it's too cold again, and he buries himself into a pile of blankets to try and escape the horribleness of it all. He's exhausted, and then he's sick, and then he's starving, then he's so thirsty that he thinks he's going to die. His throat is sore, and his skin is sensitive, and Wilbur is suffering so much that he wonders what the fuck he even did to catch such a bad fever.

He's not alone, at the very least.

That part is a comfort. A reassurance, more like. Wilbur is not alone. It is the apocalypse, and he *should* be in danger, his life *should* be on the line, with being unable to stand and defend himself properly-- but it's not.

He's safe.

He's being taken care of. Hands hold back his hair when he's puking his guts out, voices reassure him that he'll be alright, and a small, tiny part of him is *very* fucking confused about all of it. It's- strange, for the most part.

But it's not as if he can do anything against it, so he just kinda...rolls along with it. As one does.

Phil brings him medicine and water routinely, always there at his side when Wil opens his eyes. It's like he never leaves, and he's always checking on Wil, always brushing a hand over his forehead to check his temperature, always adjusting the blankets over his chest to make sure that he stays warm. He's so kind and he's so *much*, and Wilbur knows that he's been calling him dad far too much over these past few days, but no one is calling him out on it, so he can't make himself stop. Phil seems happy about it, anyway. Who is he to break the joy?

Tommy usually brings Wilbur plates of food from the kitchen, and with it, his own form of entertainment. He insists Wil can't be bored during 'eating time' so he works earnestly on making sure Wil's got something to focus on. Whether that be a lengthy presentation over his crayon works of art, or a thorough argument of why Floof is the best dog in the history of ever, he makes it happen.

Wilbur listens. He's half asleep through it, and is mostly just focusing on getting food into his mouth, but he listens. Sometimes he offers his own input, with a raspy, quiet voice. Sometimes he doesn't say anything at all. Tommy is thrilled either way, rambling on for hours. Wilbur is content.

Technoblade doesn't quite linger around Wilbur like the other two, but it's not for lack of trying on Tommy's part. Techno just stays busy, often in the kitchen, or out in the hall, or upstairs at the garden. He works and he cleans and he sorts through supplies, and he carries conversation with Phil, and he gives new sets of clothes to Wil, and he keeps the place *running*.

It's clear he's an experienced survivor, and it's even more clear that he's figuring out how to handle more company at his home. He's so focused on getting more things into the apartment and readjusting everything that it makes Wilbur feel like he's preparing for something.

For what, Wil doesn't know. But he does know that Tommy doesn't care for it.

There's one point when he wakes up that he hears Tommy whining away near the kitchen, loud and insistent. When he turns over to see what's going on, he finds his brother practically hanging off of Techno's arm, hands digging into his sleeve. Technoblade looks

mildly inconvenienced, his lips pressed tightly together to prevent a smile. Tommy looks ecstatic, bits of laughter stabbing through his fake complaints.

“Tommy-” Techno tries to shake him off, and Tommy clings on tighter, giving a loud shriek.

“You already looked at the garden yesterday!” He says, kicking his legs against the floor, against Techno’s shins. “You’ve got to look after Wilbur with me today.”

“Phil can help you with Wilbur.” Technoblade tries to push Tommy off with his other hand, but then Tommy just takes hold of that arm too, and he pulls all his weight down, forcing Techno to lean over at the hip. Tommy is slowly lowered to the floor, Techno’s hands kept tightly in his.

“Dad’s having a makeover.” Tommy tries to lean back, Techno being the only thing keeping him properly sitting up. “He’s getting a haircut ‘n everything.”

“Is that what he’s doing?” Techno murmurs. “I was wondering why he was asking for the scissors...”

“He told me to get you so we can watch over Wilbur!” Tommy swings his feet up, whacking at Techno’s knees. “So we’re going to do that. No garden. No outside.”

“Tommy-”

“Only Wilbur. Wilbur bonding time.”

Wil huffs and closes his eyes at that point. He’s fairly sure Tommy ends up winning his argument, because the next time he wakes up, Techno’s sitting beside him, helping Tommy with making a new set of crayon masterpieces on what little paper they have.

It becomes a thing, he's pretty sure. Wilbur sleeps a lot for most of the week, and he stays out of it, with his body turning against him, but he notices the little things. Techno's voice over his head, Tommy giving responses. Phil's laugh, given at a deadpan joke that Wil didn't catch. Tommy's ceaseless whining which turns into a tone of victory when Wilbur feels a new company joining his side.

Sometimes, an unfamiliar, callused hand will check his forehead for his temperature rather than Phil's hand. Sometimes, Wilbur stirs to the sound of someone reading out loud, to both him and Tommy, giving tales of warriors long ago. Sometimes, Wil sees Technoblade hovering close, Tommy rambling on while curled up in his arms, and he thinks- *Yeah, that seems about right. That's how the universe is meant to be.*

But then the fever breaks. The week ends.

And Wilbur gets his common sense back, having it crash into his skull like a train flying off the rails.

He wakes up in a bed. Their bed, technically. The only one in this apartment, he's sure of it. Waking up here wouldn't be all that strange if it weren't for the fact he didn't fall asleep here. He's been sleeping in the living room. They all have been.

Or, he's pretty sure they have been. Last night was kinda fuzzy, to be fair. The most he recalls there is Tommy cuddling up against his side and elbowing him in the gut at one point.

He blinks up at the ceiling with a heavy weight of confusion. He looks down. All the blankets around him are a bit of a mess, thrown over him, but not placed properly onto the bed. It's as if they've been moved recently, so Wilbur assumes they finally cleaned up the makeshift camp in the living room and returned everything to where it was meant to be, in the bedroom.

....Although, that doesn't explain why *he* was apparently a part of cleaning everything up. Did they move him in his sleep? How did he not wake up for that?

(In his defense, he's been sleeping through nearly everything, though. Feeling secure in your surroundings for the first time in years does wonders for knocking the fuck out, apparently. The more you know.)

He sits up after a long minute of considering the logistics of how they could've carried him over to an entirely different room while he was asleep. Techno probably did it. The window's curtains are shut, but there's still some light coming through, a bright morning on the other side. Wilbur stares at it with a comfortable sense of peace, then he turns his head to the door. It's left ajar, the hallway bright with sunlight on the other end.

He bites at the inside of his cheeks, breathing in deeply, and getting an overwhelming rush at the fact he no longer feels like he's at death's doorstep. He's well-rested. He's *well-rested*. He is not tired. If anything, he is tired of being tired, and is now just wide awake.

A smile pulls at his lips, relief sinking through his ribs. There's no headache behind his eyelids. No cold chill or burning sweat on his skin. He's not nauseous, or exhausted, or dizzy.

He is hungry, though. He craves one of the meals he's been getting throughout this whole week, but there's an edge of wariness onto it now, with knowing where the meals came from.

Wil sighs as he works his legs out from the layers of blankets over him. If Techno wanted to poison them, he'd do it by now, wouldn't he? (Or maybe he's still biding his time, who knows. Maybe he's gathering up trust for the final blow. That's what Wilbur's survivor mind whispers. Stupid paranoia.)

Wilbur is still wearing soft, clean clothes that don't quite fit him. The pajama pants hang past his heels, and the shirt falls far past his hips. He's fairly sure these are Techno's. He doesn't know how to feel about that, so he chooses to not think about it.

He pushes himself onto his feet instead, feeling his legs shake with the effort of finally standing. He leans a hand on the bed behind him, standing still for a moment, just getting used to the feeling of actually being on his feet.

It's so quiet around him. It's calm. Wilbur soaks it in with a deep breath, and as the seconds tick on by, his thoughts come back online. His head is clear, and then it's swarming, and questions are forming up one right after the other.

Where's Tommy? Where's Phil? Why is it so quiet? Not that Wilbur expected it to be loud, the apocalypse always has a certain sort of silence sticking to it at all times, but this silence feels daunting. Maybe that's just his head. Maybe it's not. Maybe the gut feeling on his side is right, and something is wrong, and he is just standing here, doing nothing about it.

He can't be sure.

All the memories in his head feel like a fever dream, too good to be true, and he's really not sure which ones are real or not. He doesn't know if his mind made them up, hoping for a sense of comfort, or he's really having his luck begin to lift. It's all so...bizarre.

He moves, walking towards the door with steady, slow footsteps. His socks drag against the floor as he steps out of the room, poking his head into the sunlight with a slight frown. The day seems so bright, too vivid. He squints his eyes for a moment before stepping all the way out.

There's the clinking sound of something getting moved around in the kitchen. It sounds like plates or pots or something of that sort. Wilbur creeps through the hall quietly, sticking close to the wall. When he comes out into the living room, his eyes stay lingering on the weapons hung up on the empty space above the couch, before moving on towards the kitchen. There's a familiar sight waiting for him there.

"...Phil?" Wilbur calls, standing in the doorway of the kitchen, a hand held to the counter nearby.

Phil stops in where he was setting plates out, and he jerks his head up with wide eyes, surprise flowing through him. He looks more put together than how Wilbur last remembers. His hair is loose over his shoulders, a little shorter than usual with a tiny braid just beside his ear. He's wearing a loose fitting t-shirt, with pants that are rolled up around his ankles. He's not wearing shoes. Wilbur isn't either, but for some reason, it's strange to see Phil without any.

In this image, with him setting up what looks to be breakfast, he looks at home. Not a survivor, or a killer, just a man preparing for food on the table. The only slight nod to the apocalypse are the neat bandages wrapped around his hands and arms, but even then. Those are clean. No blood stains in sight.

Wilbur swallows past the strangely emotional lump in his throat. “Uhm.”

“Holy shit.” Phil puts the plate he was holding down, his face breaking out into a grin.

“Hi?”

“Wilbur.” Phil moves towards him, and Wil’s suddenly getting pulled into a hug, arms wrapped around him. He freezes, then he leans his chin into Phil’s shoulder with a slow smile. “Mate, you’re up!”

“Yeah.” Wilbur moves to hug him back, laughing a little. He pulls back after a few seconds, and Phil holds him by the arms, lifting a hand to press a palm against his forehead. “I don’t feel like shit for once.” He shrugs, Phil’s grin only seeming to grow warmer.

“You’re not burning up too much.” Phil hums. “It’s better than how it’s been. You’ve been-” He sucks in air through his teeth, barely shaking his head. “Hell, you’ve been out of it.”

“That bad?” Wilbur grimaces.

“Everyone was worried. You seemed better after that first night...then you just kept sleeping. Technoblade went downstairs to get stronger medicine after the third day. You woke up every now and then but you weren’t- all there, really. Just seemed tired. It spooked Tommy a bit.”

“I *was* tired.” Wilbur admits, feeling a little guilty at scaring Tommy. If there’s one thing he clearly remembers, it was the exhaustion. The bone-deep need to just curl up and rest for as

long as the world would allow it. He wishes he fought harder against it, if only to let Tommy know he was alright. “Still am, kinda.”

“Personally, I think it’s all stress.” Phil says, pushing him towards the living room, urging him to sit on the couch. “Here, c’mon.”

“Stress?” Wilbur repeats skeptically, glancing over his shoulder.

“Mate.” Phil deadpans. “You’ve been on edge for the entire couple of weeks I’ve known you. You’ve been worried sick about Tommy, you’ve been worried as hell over me, I can’t even begin to talk about the stress when we went through the hoard-- honestly, I would’ve been surprised if you *didn’t* fucking collapse at one point when it was all over.”

“Still.” Wilbur huffs, sinking into the couch cushions with a slight relief. His legs are tired. “How long was I sick?”

Phil crosses his arms over his chest, giving a light shrug. “A week or so.”

“A week?” Wilbur repeats. He shakes his head. “No.”

Phil makes an expression that only offers sympathy. He raises his hands up, palms out as in surrender. “Five days, technically. But it’s basically been a week.”

“A-” Wilbur looks for any hint of a lie in Phil’s eyes. He sees nothing. “I’ve been- A whole week passed?!” He leans back, holding a hand to his head. “No- that’s-”

Sure, time drifted. Sure, he was awfully sick. Wilbur has strange, scattered memories and a persistent soreness in his limbs, which proves it well. But a week. A whole week, gone to being *sick*?

Wil feels like he's missing something. Like he missed a step and it's going to come back to bite him sooner or later.

Phil stands in front of him with a slow nod. There's something apprehensive in the tension around his shoulders. "What do you remember?" He asks carefully.

Wilbur lifts his head, stammering a bit. "I don't-?" He still baffled over losing a whole week due to his body deciding to fuck him over for no reason. "Did anything happen?"

Phil looks hesitant, but he nods again. It's not too serious looking, so Wilbur tries to not let himself worry. Phil would tell him if something truly bad happened.

He thinks hard for a long second, leaning forward with a hand against his mouth. "I know you and Tommy watched over me for most of the time." He says. "And I know you stayed next to me nearly 24/7." And in that time, Wilbur also kept putting Phil in the role of his father, but he's not touching that just yet, because he just woke up and emotions are tedious.

Phil smiles. "Sometimes Techno took over for me. But yeah, I mostly kept an eye on you."

"Wasn't Technoblade busy?" Wilbur asks, remembering the man always walking around, always doing something in the background while Tommy tried to catch his attention. "Or-wait." He scrunches his nose. "Was Tommy- Did he kept trying to get Techno to keep me company?"

Phil snorts. The hesitance in his eyes washes into fondness. "Oh yeah. He was persistent with that one."

Wilbur twists his face up into a vague frown. Phil scoffs at the look.

"He wanted you two to bond." He explains further. Wilbur's face only twists up more, like he's eating a lemon. "He's really not so bad, Wilbur, stop making that fucking face."

“He’s literally named the Blood God.” Wilbur points out. He points off towards the door leading to the balcony. “He has a wall made of dead bodies. Dead bodies.”

“And he worked very hard on it. He’s a very ambitious person.”

“He’s very driven, I’ll give him that much.” Wilbur raises his eyebrows. “What was he doing?”

Phil blinks. “Hm?”

“When I was sick? He kept- doing things.” Wilbur looks around for a second. He’s fairly sure there’s a new table in the kitchen. There’s a drawer in the living room that wasn’t there before. Wil notices a few guns stored to the side of the couch, which...were not a part of the display on the wall. Where did those come from?

“He’s been stocking up.” Phil says. “Trying to get the place settled in with all of us, and ready for the, uh.” Phil falters. “Hm. How do I say this?” He glances to the screen door that overlooks the street.

“Say what?”

A knock sounds out at that moment, practically echoing in Wil’s ears with how much it catches him off guard. Both him and Phil look to the front door, watching it creak open with two people coming inside.

“We’re home!” Tommy yells, earnestly holding a basket in his arms that looks a tad too big for him. Technoblade is right behind him, holding an even bigger basket. “And we got the goods!”

“The garden is all out for now, Phil.” Technoblade calls out, waiting for Floof to waltz in before he closes the door with his foot. “We’ll be fine for a good while, but we should probably start thinking on clearing out the storage house-”

His words are cut off with the sound of Tommy shrieking.

“WILBUR!” He screams, absolutely overjoyed. The basket in his arms is thrown to the side, and a few potatoes roll out, falling onto the carpet.

“Oh-” Wilbur watches Tommy sprint out from the kitchen, and he groans as the kid slams right into his middle, pushing him backwards onto the couch. “OKay-” He struggles to breathe with the way a blur of a seven year old just landed into his ribs. “Hi, Tommy. Hey.” He wheezes a little.

“You’re awake!” Tommy peels himself away from Wil’s chest, sitting on his legs so he can look directly up at him. “When did you wake up!?”

“A few minutes ago.” Wilbur answers honestly. He keeps his arms loosely wrapped around Tommy, and Tommy leans against his shoulder with a bright grin. “I’m still a bit tired, so-”

“Stop being tired. You’re unsick.” Tommy wriggles a hand up and presses his palm onto Wilbur’s face. “You’re colder now, so you can’t be sick again. It’s against the law.”

“The law?”

“The Tommy law.” Tommy smacks his hand against Wilbur’s face. “The Supreme Law.”

“Can’t argue with that.” Technoblade says, hovering by the doorway after having put his basket down in the kitchen. Floof sits next to his feet. “Law is law.”

“We’re in the apocalypse, laws no longer apply.” Wilbur shoots back.

Phil laughs. “HA!” Then he clears his throat. “Sorry.”

“Phil agrees with me.” Tommy beams at Wil. Then he turns towards Techno and Phil. “He needs medicine now.” He declares, eyes bright like he’s expecting the order to be carried out immediately.

“Maybe he should eat some breakfast before.” Phil advises. “Medicine doesn’t work so well on an empty stomach, remember? He’ll have it in a bit, to keep him unsick.”

Tommy frowns unhappily at that, but he nods.

“I’ll get it out.” Techno walks back into the kitchen, heading to grab whatever drugs they’ve been feeding Wilbur so he doesn’t flop over and die. “Good to know this one actually made a difference. Maybe we can finally get started on clearing out the horde sometime soon.”

“After we’re sure Wil’s entirely well.” Phil insists.

“Of course, of course.” Technoblade replies from the kitchen. “They’d be fine regardless, but yeah.”

Wilbur has an unsteady smile stuck on his face. He cradles Tommy a little closer. “Sorry, the- the what?” Did Technoblade mention a horde? Clearing out a horde? Why would they need to clear out a horde anytime soon? Didn’t that pass them by now?

Phil turns to him. Tommy hits a hand into Wilbur’s chest.

“Don’t worry, we’re not going to die.” Tommy says. That’s somehow rather reassuring, but it’s still not enough to make the back of Wilbur’s head stop screaming.

“It’s probably better to show you than tell you.” Phil waves a hand for Wilbur to stand up. “It can’t reach us from here, we’re entirely safe.”

“Phil.” Wilbur says, Tommy climbing off from him as Wilbur stands to his feet.

“The place is secure.” Phil continues, walking towards the balcony door. “Techno’s been stocking up and getting spare supplies around the building so that we could hold out until you got better. We were thinking of hitting the storagehouse once we knew you and Tommy would be alright while home alone.”

Wilbur follows him over, not at all liking the picture this is painting. Tommy holds onto his hand as they move to the window, getting a proper view into the street below.

Wil freezes.

“It got in the night you fell sick.” Phil says, as Wilbur stares out into a sea of stumbling zombies scattered all across the road before them. “Techno thinks one of the walls must’ve been faulty, or he missed a spot in securing it, but, well- we can’t really check until we get the fuckers out.”

“The point is, now we have zombies in our front yard.” Technoblade calls out. He says that like they’re just annoying pests, rather than things that have brought towns to ruins.

“Oh.” Wilbur nods. He feels Tommy squeeze his hand. “I- alright, then.”

Phil glances at Wilbur. “Mate?”

Wilbur stares past the glass, an overwhelming weight sitting onto his heart. The horde can’t reach him from here. They’ve been here a week, and they’ve been fine. This place is surely secure, because no one is panicking. No one is scared. There are zombies swarming the area around them, and no one seems too worried. So it must be fine.

The atmosphere doesn't stick to Wilbur, unfortunately. The feeling of danger sinks into his shoulders, and it refuses to let go. He swallows. His stomach flips.

"I think I'm going to puke." He mutters. Phil looks at him with a panicked look. Tommy sprints away from him, screaming 'bucket!'

Chapter End Notes

whacks sumw!Wilbur this boy can fit so much trauma and stress (It's ok though he's going to get so many hugs)

also slight ramble for a second, but like all of sbi have their own effects of the apocalypse, and I find them all so interesting. Wilbur basically self destructs and sacrifices himself for Tommy, focused on only survival. Phil throws his well-being out the window for others, wanting take advantage of the fact he's immune (And he also has slight guilt over that bc survivors guilt eyyy) Technoblade is a big ole ball of Denial and "actually I will now be extremely productive rather than think about my Emotions" but he is entirely willing to murk several cities for the chance of a Happy life again with People. And Tommy wants family. He wants the big happy family, he wants the happy home, the safe base, the normal chances with Wilbur being happy again.

I like Tommy's motives the most tbh. He's a kid scarred by the world around him, and he's found safety at last, so the first chance he gets, he decides to make it as permanent as he can. By having it be Family. Which means he's gotta Get The Older Bros to Bond.

anyhow anyhow. Sorry for the short chap. Also this is dedicated to Forest. Hi Forest, from twitter. Hope you liked the chap.

if you listen closely you can hear me screaming face down into the concrete /pos

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“I’m fine.”

Wilbur gets maneuvered right back onto the couch, Phil pushing him towards it in such an insistent way that he practically collapses face-first into the cushions. He pushes himself up, trying to sit straight, trying to pretend that his heart is beating perfectly steady.

Phil kneels down in front of him with his hands hovering out beside his leg. Wilbur tries to pull him by the sleeve to get him to stand back up, and when Phil doesn’t budge, he then tries to push him away.

“I’m fine.” Wilbur nods quickly at Phil, adjusting himself in where he sits. Phil hardly looks convinced, and Wil wants to wash that expression off his face. He closes his eyes. “I’m fine, I’m overreacting. It’s fine-” He holds a shaking hand out.

“I got a bucket!” Tommy declares as he runs back to them, crashing into the cushions next to Wilbur. “Bin.” He corrects. “Bucket-bin. I have it.”

He holds up the trash bin in his arms, and Wil swallows hard at the sight of it, not at all willing to lose his lunch again. He ignores the unease sitting deep in his belly, the way his lungs are squeezing together, and he frantically waves Tommy off, pushing the bin away. Tommy scoots back, willing to do anything Wilbur wants.

“Thank you, Tommy.” Phil says, taking the bin and putting it to the side as Tommy leans back against the cushions. He turns his attention back to Wilbur. “Wilbur.”

“Hnn.” Wilbur flaps a hand out, holding his palm to his mouth and shaking his head like he can just- disagree with the feelings he’s having right now. Maybe if he closes his eyes tightly

enough and keeps refusing the world around him, this bad feeling in his heart will go away, and he'll compose himself. The bone deep fear will dissolve into nothing, and he'll be as easy-going as all the others.

"It's fine." He insists, words muffled against his palm, his throat seeming to close up on him, disliking the thought of air. He wheezes, and has a moment of frustrated despair. Why is this happening? Why is he acting like this, what is he doing? He knows how secure this spot is, it's not like the horde is going to find a way up the damn stairs.

He knows this, he knows it well and he knows they're safe but the sight of that horde all over again- the same one they pushed their way through for days on end-- it makes it feel like that safety is nothing but a flimsy lie, even if he knows Phil would never lie like that to him.

"Fuck." Wilbur swears, and he blinks his eyes open, seeing a glimpse of Tommy's wide eyes, his face scrunched up with worry. "It's okay." He reassures, but it's not working. It sounds like he's saying that more to himself than Tommy. "I'm fine, it's- it's-"

"Wilbur." Phil catches onto his wrist, making his attention snap to him. "Breathe." He orders, and he takes in an exaggerated breath before letting it out. "With me, like me. Breathe."

"I said I'm fine." Wilbur insists, sounding slightly hysterical with it. Tommy moves away in the corner of his eye, and he feels guilt soak into him at scaring his little brother.

He tries to breathe, to listen to Phil, but his breath comes too short, and he can't make it any better. He's only getting worse by the second, fear clawing through his skin, and his heart twists up with panic at that fact.

"Wil." Phil moves his grip and wraps his fingers around the curve of Wil's thumb, pulling his hand down to rest on the couch. He places his other palm over the curve of Wilbur's knee, his thumb rubbing tiny circles into the fabric of his pants, and the little gesture makes Wilbur go still. He stares at Phil's hand, not sure what to do with the squeeze of his heart in his chest. "Copy me. Copy what I'm doing. Breathe."

“I’m okay.” Wil chokes out, his voice feeling far too small. The world is too big and he is so small.

“No, breathe.” Phil takes a heavy breath again, slow and deep, before letting it all out. Wilbur tries hard to mimic it, wanting to get rid of that worried look in Phil’s eyes. “Breathe in, breathe out.”

Wilbur nods, inhaling deeply and ignoring the slight stutter in his lungs. It’ll go away, he’s sure of it. It always goes away. It just-- takes a while.

“That’s right.” Phil says softly, and Wil feels like he’s been sent a week back in time, waking up in the dark to a nightmare, with Phil again at his side, talking him through it. “You’re alright.”

“I’m alright.” Wilbur repeats, and he keeps his eyes on the neatly wrapped bandages over Phil’s hand, clean and new. “Alright.”

“Keep breathing.” Phil makes another exaggerated breath for Wilbur to follow.

“I am.” Wilbur responds, with a touch of sass, and Phil laughs lightly. “I’m trying.”

“You’ve got it.” Phil nods, like he’s sure of it, like he’s sure there could never be any other option other than Wilbur recovering just fine, and it soothes a small part of Wilbur’s chest that was sitting a little too tightly. He breathes for a few minutes more, his focus narrowing down onto Phil’s hand, his thumb still rubbing small circles against the side of his knee.

“Sorry.” Wilbur breathes out, and Tommy gives a grumpy noise. Phil raises his eyebrows like he agrees with it.

“It’s a lot of zombies.” Tommy points out, leaning his chest into the cushion beside Wil, looking up at him. “You didn’t even know they were there, of course you got scared.”

“I didn’t expect them to be right on the street, I’ll admit that.” Wilbur nods, swallowing hard before lifting his head to look towards the balcony again. He can’t see the road from this angle, but he can see the light of the day, pouring in without a single sign of what also lurks underneath it.

Phil shifts a bit to the side from where he’s sitting, and Wilbur turns back to see Techno walking over, holding out a bottle of water in his hand. His expression is pinched, almost something that could be named as worry, and Wil takes the bottle with a small nod of thanks, not sure how to take that possible worry. His hands are still shaky.

“Are you okay now?” Tommy asks, scooting closer and leaning further into the couch cushion. Phil moves his hand from Wil’s knee to tap lightly at Tommy’s back.

“Give him a minute, mate.” He warns, and Tommy looks over his shoulder with a glare, as if Phil is doing the worst crime by telling Tommy to wait.

“I’m okay.” Wilbur insists, putting the bottle of water down in his lap so he can lean forward and push Tommy’s hair back in such a way that forces his head backwards too. Tommy whines with annoyance over the gesture, swatting Wil’s hand off, and then he throws himself forward, slamming against Wilbur’s middle to wrap his arms around his waist. Wil takes the attack somewhat gracefully, his back hitting against the couch. “I’m okay, really! It just caught me off guard, that’s all.”

“It’s okay if it scared you.” Tommy says muffled against his shirt, and Wilbur’s hand falters in where it was about to rest against the back of Tommy’s shoulder. “It scares me too.”

Another tremble shakes through Wilbur’s hand, and Phil squeezes at the hand he’s holding, as if reminding him again that he’s alright. Wilbur knows he’s alright. He knows it.

But memories are a constant, and Wil has never forgotten the day where he first lost Tommy in that horde.

He wraps his arm over Tommy as best he can and squeezes him tight, giving a hum through his throat. “No zombies are going to get up here.” He promises, and Tommy nods quick with agreement, leaning back to look Wilbur in the eyes.

“Even if they did, Techno can just kill them.” He tilts his head over to Technoblade, and Wilbur glances over to find the man shrugging in somewhat confirmation. “He’s killed a lot. Like a lot lot.”

“I have no doubts about that, believe me.” Wilbur hasn’t forgotten that wall made of zombies, carving out the border of a territory claimed with blood.

“He’s killed like a hundred!” Tommy goes on, eyes wide. “Does that make you feel better?”

“Uh-” Wilbur isn’t sure how to respond to that. He glances over at Phil, who looks only amused, then he spares a glance at Techno, whose expression is unreadable. “A little, I guess.”

Tommy isn’t satisfied. He slides back in where he’s leaning against Wil. “I know exactly what’ll make you feel better.” Tommy smiles confidently, and he twists his head to look up at Techno with a determined nod. “Go get the thing.” He orders.

Technoblade blinks. “...The thing?” He repeats.

Tommy purses his lips with annoyance, slapping his hands against Wilbur’s leg and standing up taller. “The thing!” He yells, and Techno only squints with further confusion. “The secret thing.” A realization crosses over Techno’s face then.

“Oh, wait, you mean the thing-” He points over to the hallway.

“Yes, the fucking thing!”

“Riiight.” Technoblade trails off, giving a nod, and he shares a look with Phil, who only looks at them both like they’re crazy. It’s a fond sort of look, somehow. “Of course, that thing. How could I have not known?” He asks himself, walking out from the living room to go retrieve something from the bedroom. Tommy smiles victoriously at his back, glad that Techno understood his code.

“What?” Wilbur asks then, and Tommy hops excitedly on his feet, pushing his hands down on Wilbur’s thigh. “What is he-”

“You should drink your water.” Tommy cuts him off, picking up the bottle in his lap and shoving it into Wil’s stomach to make him stop talking. Wilbur gives a wounded noise. Tommy wholeheartedly ignores it. “It’s good for you. Phil says so.”

“I do say so- Although, Tommy, don’t hit your brother-”

“He’s fine! I’m giving him water. Like a plant.” Tommy takes the bottle from Wilbur’s hands as he’s just picked it up, and he twists open the cap for him. “You’re like a potato, Wil.”

“A potato, how nice.” Wilbur says distractedly, mostly focusing on getting his mouth onto the lid of the bottle before Tommy goes spilling it everywhere. Phil tries and fails at smothering a laugh, and Tommy pushes the bottle upwards, Wilbur trying to twist away from his little hands so he won’t get water up in his nose. After Wilbur’s taken a long drink, he holds it up out of reach and clears his throat. “What plant are you, then?” He asks Tommy, to distract him from trying to earnestly take care of Wilbur in a poor clumsy manner, and Tommy pauses for a second in thought.

“Something pokey. And cool.” He answers. “Spikey. Like thorns!”

“A rose.” Phil suggests.

“No! I’m the thorns!”

Wilbur steals the cap from Tommy's hand, closing his bottle with a chuckle. "Yes, he's the thorns, Phil, can't you-?" He stops abruptly then, his face falling as his gaze gets stuck on something past Tommy.

Tommy turns around with a blinding smile, and Phil lifts his chin with a noise of understanding. "Ohhh, that thing." He says. Wilbur gives a strangled noise in the back of his throat.

"Ta-daaa." Technoblade says, holding the secret gift guitar up in the air for a moment, letting them all appreciate the sheer chaos of the colors scribbled on it. "I behold the thing."

"Give, give it!" Tommy jumps on his feet, running over with his arms held out, and Techno lifts it from his reach, jolting a bit when the kid just tries to climb him as a result.

"Hey, this is for Wil, not you." He says, and he gives a short huff when Tommy yanks at his shirt with an annoyed noise, trying desperately to get him to lower down the instrument. "Okay, okay-"

"I want to give it." Tommy says, and he gets the guitar easily enough at that. It's a bit big in his arms, but that's not too much of a concern. It's not his guitar, after all.

He turns around and marches back to Wilbur's side, absolutely beaming with each step. Wilbur stares with his mouth slightly ajar, and he lets go of Phil's hand and puts his water bottle to the side to take the guitar with fumbling movements, as if he's not quite sure how to hold it anymore. He settles it over his legs, fingers wrapping over the neck of the guitar, his fingertips pressing down on the strings, like he can't believe they're actually intact.

"Wha- This is- This-?" Wilbur sputters, and Tommy sits down on the floor next to Phil, looking over his shoulder at Techno and slapping down at the spot next to him in a clear message. Techno sits down next to him. They all sit there on the ground at Wilbur's feet, a tiny audience waiting for a reaction and maybe even a song. "Where did you get this?" Wilbur asks, his grip going tight over the strings, not daring to make a single noise from it yet.

“Guitar shop.” Techno says simply. “It cost a pretty penny, so you owe me.”

“You fucking stole it off the wall, didn’t you?” Phil asks. Technoblade shrugs like he can’t confirm nor deny that. “It didn’t cost shit!”

“Technically, before the apocalypse-” Techno goes to say, and Tommy begins on a rant, too excited to care about their bickering.

“It was Techno’s idea, he thought of it, because we were on patrol, right? And he wanted to give me a gift so we went to go pick out one for you when you got here later, and then I got the markers and I made it look cool- Look, look, I drew an explosion right here!” Tommy sits up on his knees, leaning forward to point at his drawing on the front of the guitar. Wilbur leans his head forward to take it in, eyes wide.

“Oh, that is a big explosion.” Wilbur notes, indulging Tommy. Then he pauses, looking up at Techno with a questioning gaze. “Wait, you- you got this before we came?”

“Tommy said you used to play guitar.” Techno explains, but that doesn’t get rid of the strange look on Wilbur’s face, something of a realization settling past his eyes. Technoblade looks to the ground to pick at the carpet, and Tommy points out the rest of the doodles.

“Techno drew something too! And Phil! It’s on the back, it’s right here.” They turn the guitar over on Wilbur’s lap, showing the drawings there, Tommy pointing at a rather impressive doodle of what looks to be a crow. “That’s Phil’s drawing.” Tommy says.

“You drew that?” Wilbur asks, looking up at Phil with surprise. “I didn’t know you knew how to draw.”

Phil shrugs up a shoulder, leaning against the side of the couch with a smile. “It’s a fun hobby.”

“Look, Wil.” Tommy calls Wil’s attention back, and Wilbur now notices the small bit of writing on the guitar too, mixed with different handwritings.

‘For Wilbur,’ it says, scrawled out in a font that Wilbur knows in his heart. That’s his Tommy. ‘From Tommy and Technoblade and Phil’

He brushes his fingers over the words for a moment, his throat tight as he opens up his mouth with nothing coming out. He blinks furiously, eyes wet as he chokes out a little chuckle, heart warm.

If there was ever any sign that Wil needed to confirm that this was the start of something good, this would sure be it. How long has it been since he’s played the strings of a guitar? Since the start of all this shit, he’s sure. There’s been times, passing moments where he spotted a guitar, easy to grab, but it was never the right time to get it, because why would he risk playing a song when a zombie nearby could hear it and come for him and Tommy both? Why would he put the effort to get a useless instrument when he could keep an eye out for spare supplies instead?

He always put it off. Always waited, always turned his head away, because while he wished for a day where he got to play just one more song, he knew it would be a long while before it would even be safe enough to do so.

But now he’s got it. Now it’s in his hands, it’s real, it’s solid and clean and colorful, with all the loving decoration from Tommy, and the more subtle touches from Techno and Phil.

Technoblade got this for him. For Tommy, technically, but what Tommy only ever wants is for Wil to have what he wants, so technically, Technoblade got him this.

Wilbur laughs lightly with nothing but joy, turning the guitar back around to look at the front of it again. Tommy leans against the front of his legs, poking at the sides of it, looking eager for Wilbur to do something with it.

“Play a song.” Tommy encourages, and Wil laughs again, sniffing back the urge to cry and plucking at the strings.

“It’s out of tune, I bet.” He says, and with the sour note rising through the air, both him and Tommy scrunch their nose. “Oh, that’s definitely off.”

“Fix it.” Tommy says, and Wilbur’s already doing so. “Then you can play a song!”

“Oh, why don’t we hold off a song until after breakfast?” Phil suggests, tugging lightly at the back of Tommy’s shirt. “I’m eager to listen too, but we’re going to get carried away, and Wil hasn’t eaten yet.”

“Your medicine!” Tommy remembers, and pushes himself to his feet with a grunt, taking a few steps over to the kitchen, before stopping in his tracks to look back at Wil. “Wilbur, breakfast!”

“Give me a minute, Toms.” Wilbur grins, continuing with tuning the rest of the strings.

“We don’t even have breakfast made yet.” Techno points out, his focus on Wilbur, and Tommy gives an angry little look on his back, making an impulse decision to charge and slam into the back of his shoulders, arms clinging around his neck.

“Rahh!” Tommy cries out, and Technoblade frantically slaps his hands against the ground, struggling to not tip over and let Tommy gain victory. He grabs onto Tommy’s elbows, leaning forward and forcing Tommy to lean fully onto him, then he shifts his legs from under him and stands up in one smooth motion, taking Tommy up with him.

Tommy shrieks with his feet suddenly off the ground, and he clings onto Techno’s back, screaming with laughter as Techno steps back and starts to spin around, pretending as if he’s trying to shake Tommy off.

Wilbur stares at them both with a laugh pulled from his chest, his hands frozen at the sound of Tommy sounding so childishly carefree. Even with the hoard outside, he’s so content and giggly, and it’s simply because of Techno spinning him around.

“Oh my god- careful!” Phil cackles, Tommy shrieking again and trying to wrap his legs around Techno’s middle as he leans to the side, keeping a secure hold on his arms all the while.

“Dad!” Tommy screams, as Techno makes another spin and Tommy digs his knee against his ribs. “He’s going to fucking drop me-! Dad!”

“Put him down, put him down.” Phil finally stands up then, Technoblade laughing evilly and doing no such thing, instead just running off into the kitchen, Tommy yelling loudly that he’s being kidnapped.

Wilbur’s heart squeezes with something fond and true, watching them both run off- then he pauses.

He stares down at his newly gained guitar, and then looks up at Phil when he turns to Wil. “Wha-” He laughs, a little more nervously this time. “What did he call you?”

Phil smiles, and there is an evil little glint in the warmth of his eyes. “What?” He asks, as if he doesn’t know exactly what Wilbur is talking about.

“He called you-” Wil’s mouth clicks shut, now remembering what he called Phil when he was sick. Phil has a very knowing look on his face. Wil places his hands on the top of his guitar, and tries very hard to keep a blank expression. “Uh.”

Phil laughs, and it’s a beautiful compliment to Tommy’s giggling from the kitchen. “Come on, son, let’s go see what we can make for breakfast.” He says, nodding his head to where Techno and Tommy are. His words are something that should be said in a teasing manner, but he says it far too genuine, and Wilbur’s ears burn.

Im gknna Explode like KABOOM!!!! /pos

EDIT: WHEN. WHERE YOU ALL GONNA TELL ME. THAT THIS FIC HAS ALMOST 30k KUDOS. IM GOING TO EXPLODE AGAIN WHAT ARE YOU ALL DOING HERE

oh my god im sorry i tend to forget about my like entire impact overall so in my head im just tiny writer so i never really look toooo closely at numbers and now im seeing this and i need to hug you all and give you stickers oh my gosh thank you so much im kinda freaking out bc im actually looking at my stats for once and taking them in and i feel like ive freaked out about this already but i have poor memory so eh

But anyhow. Thank you so much. Sbi. Sobs

(But also thank you)

Oh dear FEELINGS

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Phil goes to the kitchen with no mind given to the whispered shouts being given at his back. Wilbur, now caught in a different, more lighthearted sort of panic, calls for him again and again, trying hard to be subtle. Phil hears the high note of embarrassment in his voice, his words almost squeaking with how he's trying to be both loud and quiet at the same, and he can't keep the smile off his face.

He's nearly grinning when he walks into the kitchen, a wheeze wanting to escape through his lungs. Tommy turns his head to him with a curious look, and Phil returns the curiosity, seeing that in the time he took to linger in the living room, Techno had put Tommy down and moved on to look through the bottom of the cabinets. That's not really an interesting thing, but what is interesting is the fact that Tommy is holding onto a cup placed face down on the counter. He's holding it intently with both hands, as if that same cup will somehow run away if he lets go.

"What'd you got there?" Phil asks, walking over to Tommy, faintly hearing Wilbur's one last attempt at calling him back, and then a dramatic dying noise.

Tommy hears it too, by the look of his confused frown, but he moves on from whatever crisis his older brother may be having and slides the cup closer to Phil. "I'm holding onto Shroud." He says, and Phil crosses his arms over his chest as he stands next to Tommy, looking down at the cup.

"Shroud?"

"It's a spider." Techno calls out from where he's digging through the cabinet, searching for the cans tucked all the way in the back. "Do not lift that cup, Tommy."

"Phil wants to see!" Tommy insists, and Technoblade lifts his head to give a very stern sort of look. Tommy wilts, then glares with the intensity of a thousand suns.

“Why do you have a spider in a cup?” Phil asks to shift Tommy’s wrath away from Techno. Tommy turns back to him with a much happier expression. “Shouldn’t you just kill it?”

“No! He’s my friend!” Tommy screams, as if Phil’s said something horrible. He slides his cup closer to his chest, then takes several steps away, sliding the cup along all the while.

Phil holds up his hands in surrender. A faint memory of when they first met flickers across his mind, and his hands shake, before going still again.

“Alright. I’m not going to do anything.”

“You better not. He’s just a little guy. He just likes living in the cans.” Tommy keeps a wary eye, but Phil can tell he’s just playing it up. Phil would never purposefully try to upset him. “Me and Techno found him there like a week ago.”

Techno sits up straight, leaning back on his knees with a can of what looks to be peaches in his hand. “You found him, you mean. I was making dinner.”

“We found him.” Tommy repeats, determined to have this be a team effort. “And then we named him Shroud and now he’s our friend.”

“I see.” Phil nods. He looks at the cup again with a new light, and tries to imagine a tiny spider sitting inside. “Is Shroud a big spider?”

“No, he’s just a little guy.”

Technoblade gives a cough that sounds very similar to a laugh of disbelief, his head shaking for a moment as he reads over expiration dates.

“He’s very nice. He used to have a web, but right now *someone* broke it because they’re an asshole-”

“I am trying to feed us.” Techno deadpans, twisting around to look right at Tommy. Tommy narrows his eyes and lifts his nose up as if in offense.

“Hmph. Spiderweb-breaker.”

“I’m sure your, uh-” Phil falters for a second, leaning back against the counter.

“Shroud.”

“-your Shroud,” Phil continues. “-can just make another web. That’s what spiders do, don’t they?”

“They also eat bugs.” Tommy informs helpfully. “They use poison and then the bug DIES and then Shroud *eats* them. Techno said so.” Phil swears he can see stars in Tommy’s eyes as he says that. Only would a spider eating its prey be so awe-inspiring to a seven-year-old.

Wilbur chooses at that moment to stop having his internal crisis in the living room, and he comes into the kitchen with them all just as Techno’s finished up finding whichever specific can he was hunting for on the bottom shelves.

“Alright, Tommy, you can put the spider back.”

“Spider?” Wilbur repeats, seeming a bit distracted with his thoughts still. Phil means to watch how his face shifts when he looks towards Phil again, but Tommy is then filled with uncontrollable childish impulse, and there’s no stopping him from what comes next.

“Wilbur, look!” He calls, then he lifts the cup and releases Shroud to the countertops, the actually rather gigantic spider skittering towards Phil as if on a hunt. Phil screams, Wilbur screams with him, and Tommy cackles with a joy that is nothing but evil.

They settle on having peaches and hashbrowns for breakfast that morning.

After a solid ten minutes of wrangling an unreasonably fast spider back into its little spot in the cupboard, Phil collapses into a chair by the table, feeling as if he's aged another year. Wilbur sits with him, slumping into his seat as if moments away from being sent into another stress-induced coma.

Tommy moves on very quickly from the whole ordeal. He stands on a chair by the counter and chops at potatoes with an enthusiastic hand, Techno keeping a careful eye on him all the while he peels the potatoes over the sink.

For a man who was nearly seconds away from picking up Phil and throwing him into the living room to save him from a terrible chaos bringing arachnid, Techno can recover from panic fairly well. Mostly. He keeps side-eyeing Phil every few seconds, like a message for him to not put himself into mortal danger anytime soon. Phil has the urge to remind him that if he's survived through several hoards of zombies, then a single massive spider isn't going to end him. The only reason he doesn't say such a thing is because Tommy is right there, and bringing up near death experiences in crowds of rotting bodies is a real mood downer.

A piece of a potato flies off from the cutting board and hits the ground. Tommy watches it go and sees it get snatched up by Floof, who seems to inhale it in one go rather than even make an attempt at chewing.

"That wasn't for you!" Tommy says, and he gives a shooing wave at the dog. Floof takes it as a beckoning, coming closer and turning its nose up towards Tommy's hand. "Go! Out!"

"Stop begging for scraps, Floof, I feed you plenty." Techno nudges his foot gently into the side of Floof's fur, and the dog moves away, now having gotten the message. Instead of leaving the kitchen, though, it goes to sit underneath Wil's chair. Wilbur looks at the dog with a bewildered face, before having it melt into something content. He leans down and grazes his fingertips against Floof's coat.

Tommy gathers his massacred potato slices and puts them into a bowl to the side. Once he's cleaned off the cutting board, he grabs another pre peeled potato and looks over his shoulder at Wil.

"Hey, Wilbur." He calls, and Wil looks up from the dog at his feet. Tommy smiles wide. "Now that you have a guitar, you can teach Techno how to play, right?"

Technoblade turns his head suddenly to Tommy, his hands slowing in where he was peeling potato skin, his mouth opening as if he's about to protest. But then he falters. And then he just stands there like a computer that's lagging for a minute too long.

Wilbur hums with thought, not really noticing Techno's hesitance.

"Well, that's..." Wil pets at Floof's fur for a second more, then he leans back into his chair, glancing into the living room where he's left his guitar. He looks at Tommy, whose face is far too excited for any sort of rejection, just beaming with anticipation.

In this moment, Wilbur would probably murder a man to keep that little smile on his baby brother's face. He smothers down what little wariness he still has for Techno, having it replaced with only a kind warmth, and he nods.

"That's a great idea." Wil agrees, and Tommy lights up even more, nodding with Wilbur with a small hop on his feet. "After I practice a bit and get used to having a guitar again, I'm sure I can teach him a few songs."

"And then you can both sing." Phil adds on, and Technoblade turns his head towards the sink, eyes wide, staring into a potato like it's got all his answers to dealing with too many emotions. Wilbur looks at Phil with something surprised, and then he quickly averts his gaze so that he doesn't have to have eye contact with the man. Phil holds back a laugh, but only barely.

"Ehh, I'm not really a singer." Techno says, starting up peeling potatoes again, and Tommy starts up with chopping once more to follow suit. "Wilbur is, though."

“Wilbur sings all the time.” Tommy says, and that seems like it could be phrased as a complaint, but he says it with pride, like a brag. “He’s even got songs that he wrote.”

“You’ve written songs?” Phil asks, leaning his elbows against the table, and Wilbur gives a weak laugh, reaching down to pet Floof again.

“A couple. Before the apocalypse started.”

“He was going to be a singer!” Tommy insists, pointing his finger at Wil.

“I bet you would’ve been famous.” Phil says, sounding as if he wholeheartedly believes it. Wilbur smiles shakily towards the ground and wonders if it’s too early to have yet another internal crisis.

If he could, he would bottle up the nervousness that sits deep in his bones, and lift his head to smile gratefully at Phil, soaking in that blind support that only a father could so earnestly give.

Instead, he buries his hands into the fur of Floof’s coat, and grins wider when the dog twists around in an effort to lick him.

“We would’ve made so much money. We’d be rich.” Tommy agrees, now seeming a bit disappointed that his life of stardom is lost with the fall of humanity. “But nooo, zombies had to come ruin everything.”

“Technically, in comparison to the rest of the world right now, we are rich.” Techno points out, and Tommy huffs.

“But we’re not *famous*.”

Techno snorts at the indignant tone in Tommy's voice. He puts the last peeled potato on the counter beside the cutting board, and grabs the bowl of cut up potato strips, moving over to the stove.

"I don't need to be famous, Tommy." Wilbur says, shaking his head at the thought. "I'm not sure how'd I even handle a crowd."

"You can go practice on the roof. Sing to the zombie hoard, see what they think." Techno jokes.

"They're not going to hear it, their ears are probably half-rotten." Phil scrunches his nose at the mental image, and Wilbur twists his lips into a frown with him.

"They don't count." Tommy declares. "You need real fans. Lots of them. But not too many. Because *I'm* the number one fan and they can't outshine me."

"I thought you said you wanted him to be famous?" Techno asks, moving the potato slices around in the pan. "Now he can't have too many fans?"

"Yeah, because I'm the number one fan." Tommy repeats, now seeming set on that title.

"Of course." Technoblade nods, accepting that as law. He continues with making breakfast, and their conversation flips back and forth about fame and Wilbur's talent and whether or not zombie are capable of even processing music. Tommy insists they can hear, so it's a yes, but Techno argues that zombies don't have functioning brains, so it's a no. How can one enjoy music when they can't even have proper thoughts?

Personally, Phil finds the idea of a zombie enjoying music rather funny. He snickers to himself over the mental image, and Wilbur looks at him with interest, only to start snickering with him for no good reason. They sit there with the smell of hashbrowns rising through the kitchens, snickering to themselves until Tommy notices them too and demands to know what they're laughing about.

By the time Techno's done cooking the last plate, his own plate, Phil's half-way done with his meal and Tommy's began playing with his canned peaches underneath his fork. Wilbur scolds him to eat, and Tommy gives him an intense stare while stabbing the peach as if it's done a great injustice to him. Wilbur responds exactly the same, stabbing his hashbrowns with even more force. Phil clears his throat at the two of them, making them stop before they go stabbing each other with their forks.

"So." Wilbur starts, finishing chewing for a moment before continuing. "This might be an ill-timed question with us eating and all, but what exactly is the plan for the hoard outside?" He tilts his head with a small frown, and while his tone is light, Phil can catch the wrinkle of worry on his brow, the fear still sitting deep. No matter how many jokes they make about the zombies on the street, he supposes the idea of a looming hoard can't ever not be intimidating.

"Kill it." Technoblade answers simply, and then he takes a bite of hashbrowns and keeps eating like that's the conversation in whole.

"...how?" Wilbur asks, turning backwards in his chair to face Techno.

Techno shrugs, looking impossibly unconcerned. "The majority will probably be cleared out with either an axe or a sword. Blade of some kind-- wasting all those bullets isn't really worth it. Unless I get my hands on a car again. Then I can just kinda mow them down." Tommy makes a noise of awe. "After that point, when it's no longer crowds and crowds, I'll have to pick through the streets. Go through the buildings, drag out the bodies. Get rid of the stragglers."

"We." Phil corrects, and Techno looks up from his food, a confused look on his face. "We'll be picking through the streets."

Techno raises his eyebrows, slowing with eating. "...no?"

"You're going to go out on your own?" Phil asks, in a kidding manner that makes it clear that there couldn't be any possible way that he would ever be doing that-

“Yes?” Techno seems almost genuinely confused, he stands up straighter, holding his plate lower. “What, you want me to send Tommy out there with a shotgun?”

“Yes!” Tommy yells, thrilled at the thought.

“No.” Phil deadpans. He turns to Tommy for a second. “Mate, a shotgun would probably throw you right off your feet.” Tommy sinks with such sadness that he nearly faceplants into his peaches. Wilbur pats at his shoulder comfortingly. Like hell Tommy would even be stepping outside with the hoard.

“Then Wilbur?” Techno points at him with his fork, and Tommy gives a look as if he will explode if Wilbur gets to go shoot zombie heads off and he can’t.

“No, you dumbass. Me. I’m going with you.” Phil nods, and Technoblade puts his plate to the side, on the counter and he honest-to-god laughs.

There’s a moment of silence.

“Wait, you’re serious?”

“Yes?” Phil gives a baffled shake of his head, standing up from his seat. “I’m sorry, did you actually think that you were going out on your own?”

“I’ve done it before.” Techno points out. “Might I remind you of that wall of bodies I made-”

“That’s not the point- and honestly it’s impossible to forget about that damn wall.” Phil gives a slight laugh, waving a hand through the air. “You said that we would both be clearing out the hoard while Tommy and Wilbur stay here.”

Techno’s lip twitches like he wants to frown. “The hoard will be cleared out...and you guys will stay.”

Tommy scrunches up his face with something more than just childish jealousy over popping zombie heads off. It's something fearful, and Wilbur moves his leg to nudge against Tommy's ankle underneath the table. It helps a little.

Techno goes on. "I never said-

"You implied it."

"Implication doesn't always result in a promise, Phil. You're not going with me." He shrugs and reaches for his plate, like that's that.

Phil laughs now too, like Techno made a joke. Techno freezes. "Really?" He asks, something daring in his tone, and Wilbur and Tommy both share a wide-eyed look. "*Really*."

Now there's a familiar little look in Phil's eyes that Wilbur knows well. A sharp sort of glance behind a passive smile, relentless determination just burning underneath. It's something he's seen each time they faced a danger, whether that be a hoard of zombies or a group of people.

It is a stubborn, dangerous look, and Wilbur knows this isn't something one can really argue about. Phil isn't going to let anyone he cares about be put into danger.

But then again, by the looks of it, neither is Techno.

"Really." Techno repeats, his face blank.

"I'll have to disagree." Phil hums, sounding sympathetic. "Either we both go out there or we start using up all your bullets from the rooftop."

Techno shifts his jaw, like he's still trying to chew at something in between his teeth. "You're staying here with Wil and Tommy."

"No, I'm not." Phil takes a step forward, resting a hand on the back of Wil's chair.

"Hey, look- don't think I've forgotten about your leg, Phil. That's a liability. You can't run." Techno scolds.

Phil scoffs. "You have a limp, too--"

"An old limp. You still have a divot in your ankle--"

"That doesn't mean I can't go with you. I can still shoot, i can hold my own--"

"And so can I." Techno crosses his arms, leaning forward. "I cleared the roads when you weren't here, you know. Aft- after you were gone, I cleared this whole city within months, and it was swarming with zombies then too. Worse than now, because they were all up in the buildings."

"Guys." Wilbur tries to say. He's not sure what he means to do, but it doesn't feel like this conversation is going on a good path.

"Good. I know you're capable. But you can do it with help this time around." Phil insists.

Techno holds a hand up. "I'm not riskin--"

"Well, I'm not staying here while you--"

“Alright, fine.” Techno steps away from the counter, his mood now suddenly heavy. “What if you get grabbed, then? What if you go out there, and get surrounded, and I can’t get to you? What do you do then?”

“I’ll get out of it.” Phil sounds confident with that weak answer, and he lifts his head with something with more intent. “They can’t hurt me-”

“Yes, they can! You have multiple injuries that prove it!” Techno gestures to the bandages still around Phil’s skin, keeping his injuries clean and covered. “Just because you survived the first bite doesn’t mean you can keep throwing yourself at-!”

Techno then stops, the words dying in his throat.

Wilbur stares with worry at the sudden pause, and he looks to Phil’s face to find him wide-eyed, something like dread written across his features, something like worry sewn into gaze. Wil’s confused for a moment, not sure what’s happening, but then Techno’s shifts his eyes over Wilbur’s shoulder with a uneasy hesitance, and Wil realizes-

Tommy.

He turns to Tommy, and his baby brother speaks in a small tiny voice that’s nothing short of terrified.

“He’s...bit?” He asks, shrinking in his chair, and his eyes are wide, set only on Phil. “You’re-you’re infected?”

“I-“ Phil’s face flickers with fear, and he wrangles it into something softer, stronger. “No, Tommy, no, I’m alright. I’m-“ He goes to move around the table and Tommy jerks back, pressing against the back of his chair.

Phil freezes. Wilbur’s heart jumps with guilt, but it’s not his fault. Tommy knows the rules of this world well, and the rules are that if someone gets bit, you stay away.

Technoblade goes to take a step forward, seeming caught between panic and a frantic attempt at being comforting. “Tommy-“ He starts, but Wil cuts him off.

Leaning forward, with a hand reaching out, Wil reaches far into the part of him that’s kept him and Tommy together, and he talks with his voice amazingly calm. Soft.

“It’s okay. Phil’s safe.”

Tommy looks at Phil for a moment longer, tears welling up with the thought of Phil being infected. Then he turns his head to Wilbur and his outstretched hand. Puts his own small hand into Wil’s palm.

“But he’s-?“ Tommy stops himself, waiting for Wilbur to tell him he’s wrong and reassure him with things that should be impossible. Phil is bit, but he’ll be okay. He’s infected, but he’s safe.

Wilbur leans closer, his chair squeaking with the shift of weight. “He’s immune.” He whispers, like it’s a secret.

Tommy’s eyebrows furrow together. “Huh?”

“He’s immune.” Wilbur repeats. “Zombies can’t infect him.”

Tommy’s confusion only grows, and he looks at Phil, then blinks quickly, unable to stop the tears coming down his face and the shake running through his voice. “But- but you said that when a person gets bit-“

“I know.”

“-that they get sick, and then they sleep, and then they-“ a sob breaks from his chest, and Wilbur shushes him, squeezing his hand.

“That’s not going to happen. And I know it won’t, you want to know how I know?”

Tommy stares at Wilbur with nothing but pure honest trust.

“Because a year ago, Phil got bit, and didn’t get sick. A couple weeks ago, I saw him get bit, and he didn’t get sick. How long does it take for people to get sick from a zombie?”

“Two- two days.”

“Right. But Phil’s not sick.” Wilbur nods. Then he looks at Phil over the table, and Tommy looks with him. Phil looks back at them both with the best smile he can muster. It’s a little shaky, but it’ll do.

“So he’s not-?” Tommy begins to speak, but then he dissolves into a sob, something of both fear and desperate hope. “I don’t want to *lose* him!” Tommy confesses, and Phil comes over, arms reaching out. This time Tommy leans right into it.

“You’re not going to lose me, Tommy. You’re not going to lose me.” Phil promises, pulling Tommy into his arms, tucking his head into the crook of his neck. Tommy clings to him with a death grip, practically climbing into Phil’s embrace and leaving his breakfast behind. “No zombie is going to take me away.”

Tommy cries harder, maybe with relief, maybe with fear. Either way, Phil holds him close and rises on his feet, carrying Tommy against him with a soothing noise.

“I’m alright. We’re alright.” Phil says, and he turns to go towards the living room. “Here, I’ll even show you where I got bit, if you want. It’s all healed and okay now. It can’t hurt me.”

Tommy opens an eye up with consideration, then he nods, too curious to say no. “I want Henry.” He asks, and Phil complies, moving to go to the bedroom so they can find a little cow plushie there.

As he passes by Techno, he gives a meaningful little look, reaching out and squeezing at his arm for a second before then readjusting his hold on Tommy.

“We’ll talk more later. But I am going with you.” He whispers, no room for argument, then he heads off to the living room, Floof trotting away at his heels with attention towards Tommy.

Wilbur lingers at his seat. Phil’s turned the other way, his focus on Tommy, so he doesn't see how Techno stares at his back, the way he presses his lips tightly together, the way his shoulder sits tense.

He doesn't see the way Techno’s hands are shaking.

Chapter End Notes

A fun sort of comparison i like to think about is that Techno and Tommy both want the same thing. They want a family and they want safety and they want a good life with no hurt. But Tommy is a kid, he’s hopeful and stubborn so he’ll go for it, but Techno is realistic and hesitant bc he’s lost Phil once, what’s to stop the world from taking him again?

Techno has like. A lot of self denial about his grief btw. He’s like “eh im fine it’s totally cool” and then Phil does impulsive dangerous Phil things and hes like on the verge of tears like “phil pls stop”

Great fun. Lots of feelings. Wilbur’s been getting hit with the whump bat a lot lately maybe we should start swinging at techno now.

Anyhow. Thanks for reading! Leave a comment they fuel me

Communication is key! Communication is KEY. PLEASE COMMUNICATE-

Chapter Notes

WHAT IS UPPPPPP FINALS HAVENT KILLED ME YET SO HERE I AM
HAHAHAHAHAHA I LOVE SBI MWAHAHAHAHAHAHA

anyway enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Techno doesn't have nightmares all that often.

He reckons with how calm life has gotten, with how he's carved out a place of peace within this spot of the city, there's simply not much to fuel his fears. Add on the company he's had lately whilst sleeping, the comfort of having people near, Tommy sometimes practically burrowing into his side in the middle of the night-- he hasn't had nightmares in a while. It's hard to, when he knows he's safe, when there's so many reminders that everything is okay.

But even then, he still has- thoughts, sometimes. Worries for *their* safety.

If he has to be truly honest with anything, looking at Phil still feels surreal, even in the best moments. Sometimes, it's like Techno is walking in a dream, where things have gone perfectly right, where it all wound up okay like some sort of fairy tale, because really, that *is* how it went. Miraculously, Wilbur came back, found his way to Tommy through all the odds. Impossibly, he brought Phil back with him, the man *immune* to the very disease that's killed so many others.

Here they sit in Techno's home, placing down the foundation for a true, honest home, with him, with Tommy, with all of them together, happy and safe. A life that's good and almost as normal as how everything was before the cities first fell. It's perfect.

And just...too good to be true.

Technoblade is waiting for the drop. It's all grand, he's happy, he is, but there is going to be a drop. There has to be. He thinks he can see it on the horizon, he thinks he can see it coming. He can *hear* it happening, hear Phil's voice screaming in his ears as the rotting hands come closing in to tear them apart, leaving nothing but poorly-healing scars and an all-encompassing grief. He can see it, the memory burned into his head, Phil's face looking at him with no warmth, no joy, just terror. Just- fear.

There is a disaster waiting to happen, a tragedy winding back to hit them hard, to rip them all apart and let them be reminded of the apocalypse they live in, and it feels as if they're just standing around for it to come. He can't forget what he once lost, at the very beginning, and he desperately doesn't want it to repeat. So what can he do to *prevent* it? To keep this impossible sort of miracle intact? He wants to keep this.

He watches as Phil sits in the living room with Tommy curled up next to him, the kid pressed to his side like he's trying to glue himself there. The tears from earlier have been wiped away, the now mood lifted into something mellowed out with the distraction of Tommy's drawings and his stuffed cow now sitting safely in his lap. They sit there with papers in their hands, passing crayons back and forth as Tommy figures out what he wants Phil to add to each one to make it better. Phil's eyes crinkle with joy when he grins at Tommy's suggestions. Tommy's eyebrows furrow together in concentration as he presses more color onto the pages.

Technoblade doesn't want to lose this.

Wilbur steps out of the kitchen after a few minutes, bringing their half-eaten plates out so that they won't leave the meals to waste. They all end up sitting on the living room floor in a sort of circle, Techno dragged in with Phil to make some sort of masterpiece out of crayola upon Tommy's insistence that they all must contribute. Only Wilbur is left alone to his devices, because "Wil plays guitar. He's already uses all his brain cells on that."

Wilbur had taken that comment with a smug victory at first, glad to not have his hand forced to be drawing with crayons, then a second later, he processes the insult, and proceeds to capture Tommy in his arms, paying no mind to his squealing so that he could exact revenge in the form of shaking him around like a ragdoll. The two of them playfully bat hands at each other until the dog comes sniffing around and sticking its snout into their faces, and as Wilbur

complains about Floof's breath, Phil lifts up his paper and declares his great artistry creation of a bird. Tommy says it looks like a misshapen rock. Wilbur accidentally laughs and gets a narrowed look from Phil. Technoblade laughs without remorse, and he gets a smile from Phil, something exasperated and fond, before then getting smacked with the paper and told if he could draw it any better.

Technoblade doesn't want to lose them.

Him and Phil don't talk about clearing the hoard that day. He considers bringing it up later, taking Phil to the side while Wil and Tommy occupy each other, but in the end, he just doesn't get the chance. Tommy keeps clinging to Phil for the entirety of the day, due to the scare of finding out about his zombie bites, and there's no getting him away in his loving worry. He's the equivalent of a little duckling throughout the afternoon, staying at Phil's heels no matter where the man goes. Phil indulges his company, having nothing else he'd rather do, and well, he maybe goes back and forth in the hall more than what is needed that day, as well, both Wil and Techno smiling softly to themselves when Tommy holds onto the back of Phil's shirt the whole way.

Techno mulls over the idea of having the hoard be a late night talk, even if he wouldn't care for the atmosphere of having such a serious topic be discussed at that time, but the chance of that is torn from possibility when Tommy falls asleep practically on top of Phil early that night, fingers dug into his shirt as if the world will steal his dad away. It was to be expected, him and Phil having been laying down on the bed as a way to wind down, but maybe Phil hadn't entirely considered the consequences of his actions there.

"Help me shift him?" Phil asks both Wilbur and Techno for help, but Techno refuses out of a sort of need for everyone to suffer as he did in the months before with Tommy's great lack of awareness for personal space, and Wilbur refuses because he wants to mess with Phil, and because he enjoys the look of his little brother cuddling warmly with his father figure.

"You can't move now." Wil informs Phil, and Techno plays along with it, the two of them sporting matching grins, uniting under the common goal of teasing Phil. "If you move, you die."

"You have to stay like that until he wakes up." Techno nods.

“Or until he feels like getting up.” Wil adds.

“That’s probably going to be like...about nine hours. Settle in, Phil.” Technoblade waves a hand, Wilbur making a muffled laugh to the side.

“I hate both of you.” Phil mutters over Tommy’s head with a sour bitterness, but he hugs the kid closer with all the sweetness of a parent’s love. Wilbur turns in for bed not long after that, resting next to Phil with a hand held onto Tommy, a blanket pulled up over to cover the three of them. Techno pleads an excuse about needing to clean the kitchen when Phil calls him to bed, and he promises he’ll go to sleep in just a few minutes. Phil dozes off before he can insist for Techno to leave it, too caught up in the drowsy comfort of holding his boys close.

The kitchen does need a bit of tidying up, to be fair, but it’s not all that Techno’s after when he walks in. He makes his way over to the cabinets first, Floof trotting along in his shadow, curious as to what his owner is up to. As the fluffy dog lays comfortably in the middle of the kitchen, Techno begins to look through what cans they’ve got, counting the number of them up in a way similar he used to do within his storagehouse, mentally cataloging just how long they could hold out before they truly need to face the hoard.

If they rationed, they could do for a while, but Techno would rather not try that, seeing as how Phil and Wilbur have recently come off from traveling on the road, and they need to get back onto a decent diet, Wil especially.

He also doesn’t want to wait until they’re on their very last meal either, though. With the stress of starving looming over, that could make their decisions hectic. There's a ticking timer about this, calling for action to be made, and the amount on it is shorter than Techno would like.

After the better part of a half-hour or so, the amount of food now having been taken into consideration, Techno moves on from the kitchen to look outside, to take in the sight of his road. Out on the cement, there stands a horde, nothing much of significance to note about it, although Techno will say they’re far more spread out compared to the early days, when he was first clearing the city. He supposes that’s because there’s far less zombies in the crowd, the bodies no longer bunched up, but that doesn’t mean it isn’t still a significant number. Even just a few could effectively swarm a person with ease; this right here is practically a death sentence to the typical survivor.

However, Techno isn't a typical survivor. Not with the ammo and weapons he's got, not with the sheer experience he's gained underneath his belt in the months of sweeping this city out. In all honesty, ever since he began building up those walls, zombies had grown to become nothing more than an extra pest to him, a sort of fly that you just need a stronger swing to swat off. Techno doesn't feel fear for his life when he looks down at his infested streets, knowing he'll be down there with the monsters soon enough.

He feels worried.

There's a dread curling up in the back of his throat, threatening to choke him off every breath he takes as he stands there and looks out at the sea of the dead. Even when he looks away into the calm quiet of his living room, the weight lingers and festers over his heart. He knows he can handle himself, he's done it before. He can survive, he'll live, he did it once, he'll do it a hundred times over, but-

Can he protect Phil, while being out there? Can he stop Phil from being *Phil*, the idiot that he is, using his immunity like his only shield, using his body to keep others from being hurt? Technoblade will never die, not as long as he wills it, but he is not in control of if Phil rushes in front of him, if he takes a hit just for the sake of thinking he can take it instead. Perfect example being when they first discovered the hoard, Techno being caught down in the storagehouse-- what had he done then? What had Phil gone and done? Given the knife to Techno, used his bare hands without care if they'd get torn to bits by bloody teeth.

God, Phil loves him, loves them all, but Techno knows his love is a self-destructive sort, his goal being to give and give until he just can't anymore, until there is nothing left but the quiet satisfaction of having cared for what he deemed important. He wonders if it's a side-effect of him being immune, being the survivor when so many didn't make it. He's somewhat upset about the concept of such an effect.

Technoblade walks back to the room on shaky legs, memories haunting him a little louder in every step. It's only when he reaches the doorway that he finds a sense of relief in the dark. Tommy's snoring is a familiar thing to his ears, and the sight of the back of Wil's head with his hair all tousled is something fond. Phil doesn't stir when Techno crawls underneath the blanket with a careful silence, taking his spot at his side. He may not lay himself right on top of Phil as their resident seven-year-old has, but he does tuck his head up against the man's shoulder, a soothing type of reassurance in the press of warmth against his cheek. He stays

there, thoughts fading off into the quiet, and in the moments before he drifts off, he feels Phil's arm readjust around him, laid over his shoulders. He sleeps, and dreams.

He doesn't have nightmares all that often.

But in the early morning, he wakes up with a gasp before all the others. He wakes up with a racing heart and shaking hands, and he stays sitting up with his sword leaning up against the bedside table, in each, and his eyes glued to the door, worries swarming his mind all the while.

There's a tension waiting in the air when Wil wakes up in the morning.

It's not an obvious thing. It's only a hint of suspense, insubstantial and hazy as it curls around them all. No one acts off, Tommy is as grumpy as he is every morning, and Phil is as sleepy in return. Technoblade is out of the room before Wil opens his eyes, but his sword sits against the nightstand, and he calls back a hello from further in the apartment when Tommy screams a good morning at him down the hall. There's nothing to imply anything wrong, nothing obvious to spot, but there's still an internal shift Wil feels in the space between his ribs. A silent, mental warning to wait and keep an eye out for, for....

Hm. For *something*. To be honest, Wilbur can't be all that sure what's the cause of the subtle mood. Between the stumbling hoard outside, Phil's immunity and his injuries again being brought to the light, *and* the slight argument from yesterday-- they've all got good reason to be a bit on edge. It's to be expected.

He would almost brush it off, chalk it up to the usual stress one gets within the apocalypse, but- No. That's not quite it, isn't it? None of those things are it. There was one thing in particular that stuck with him from the day before, and it wasn't Tommy's panic, soothed by his own words, nor was it Phil's sharp anger, at Techno's insistence he'd be staying behind shelter when dealing with the zombies outside. No, those things felt taken care of, calmed down and put aside before they became any real worry.

It was Techno.

During that last minute before things had eased out, during when Phil had been walking away, Tommy held in his arms, the mood mellowing out, Techno had looked- haunted.

Wilbur is remembering it all too vividly now.

The man looks better now, making breakfast in the kitchen, indulging Tommy's endless questions through every step of the process, but Wilbur can't get himself to entirely believe it. He can't shake the image from his head, Technoblade looking at Phil's back with a fear so raw that it seemed misplaced, when put on him of all people. Wil's not used to seeing his expression be anything other than varying levels of confidence or smugness. He's also not used to this sudden concern pulling him around, the string attached to the same person Wil quietly swore he was going to kill a near month back.

Wilbur *wants* to say he's still got a grudge with Techno, some protective part of his heart wishing to stay stubborn on behalf of his brother's wellbeing, but whatever resentment Wilbur may have had during the first week they met has more or less dissipated by now. There's a tentative trust between them, whether they'll admit it or not. Techno does care for Tommy, has cared for Tommy, and since Wil also cares for Tommy, this is all the common ground Wil needs to let their differences fade off.

It's still a bit awkward between them both, though. With Phil or Tommy as a buffer, Wilbur thinks he could make a decent conversation with Techno in the mix, but if they ever had to speak one on one, Wil thinks he'd rather just step outside onto the street filled with zombies. Which raises the problem: how does Wilbur approach Techno about what he saw yesterday? Does he just check in, ask if he's doing fine? What would even be Techno's response to *that* ? A confused expression and a "yeah?" Could Wilbur press on to that response? Should he? How would he?

It's all new territory, with Techno. Wil still needs time to figure him out. He knows Tommy, he's raised him, and he knows Phil, he's depended on him in a life or death situation more than once. Techno is frustratingly distant compared to them. Wilbur doesn't know how to bridge the gap and relieve the quiet tension that's running around them all.

So he uses Tommy for it.

He takes his gifted guitar from the day before, the thing having been put to the side and forgotten in Tommy's tunnel-focus on making sure Phil was absolutely alright, and he sits on the couch to play it properly at last. He's rusty at this point, no doubt, but it doesn't particularly matter, because the second he plays a few measly notes, Tommy comes running as if he's missing the performance of a lifetime.

"You can't start without me! Don't start without me!" He yells at Wilbur, throwing himself at the ground so he can sit by his feet, looking up at all his guitarist glory.

"I was just warming up." Wilbur tries to reassure, fiddling with the tuning again, trying to get it right. "I'm out of practice."

"That's still *starting*." Tommy argues, calling Floof over so the dog can sit with him in the audience section and witness the best performance of all time. Floof lays on his back with his belly up in the air for pats. Tommy proceeds to multitask between witnessing Wilbur's incredible skill and also petting at a dog's belly as vigorously as possible.

Wilbur huffs down at his little brother, then adjusts the instrument in his grasp. "Any requests?" He asks, and Tommy raises his hand up straight into the sky.

"Oh! Oh! The one where, where like, it went all-" He makes a string of noises that Wilbur somehow recognizes as one of his songs, and with that prompt, he proceeds to try and play it. It's a rough start, at first. Wilbur doesn't have his written notes for his songs with him anymore, so it's all upon memory and trying to fill in the gaps, but Tommy's plenty content to listen to him struggle through it, to start over in the same spot again and again until he gets the song mostly correct with only a few hiccups throughout.

By time Wilbur's gone onto his third song, polishing out the tune of it into what it once was, he's noticed that his audience has grown, both Techno and Phil lingering by the doorway into the kitchen, listening with almost as much focus as Tommy is right before him. In the middle of Wil and Tommy trying to figure out if a specific part is being played wrong, Phil says something to Techno and walks away, making Wil pause for a second and glance up, resulting in Tommy looking up as well.

The sound of the front door opening makes Wilbur's hand fall from his strings in confusion, and Tommy cranes his head forward, trying to look around the doorway and Technoblade so

he can see what Phil is doing.

“Where’s Phil going?” Tommy asks before Wilbur can, kneeling up from the ground like he’s about to get up and go find out himself.

“He went to go move some trash out.” Techno answers from where he’s staying leaning by the doorway, and Tommy sits back on the floor, satisfied by the response. “He’ll be right back.”

Wilbur hums in acknowledgement for the reassurance, but the image of Techno now standing alone makes mischief crawl up his back, and his smile curls into something a little evil. He scoots a little to the side, patting down on the cushion to his left. “Techno, come sit next to me.” He says, not daring to make it a question. Techno will have no choice in this. Especially once Tommy gets even a hint of the idea.

Techno blinks. “Huh?”

“I-” Wilbur turns his decorated guitar in his hands, lifting it up to Techno as if beholding treasure. “-am going to teach you how to play guitar.” There’s no grand fanfare, no glowing aura from the instrument with his declaration, but with how Tommy’s eyes go wide with a sudden vivid joy, there might as well be sparkles in the air.

“Uh...” Technoblade hesitates, holding up a hand. He makes a half-step back, and Wilbur’s smile twitches into a toothy grin. Ha. He thinks he can get out of it. “I don’t think I’d-”

“Tommy, get him.” Wilbur says, and Tommy immediately climbs up off the floor, running at Techno and making Floof run up with him in his excitement.

“No, no- stay away-!” Techno protests, and Tommy clings onto his arm with all his weight with a war cry that’s more akin to a shriek. Technoblade stumbles in the sudden attack, and well, if you give Tommy an inch, he will drag out a mile. “Floof, attack! Attack, Floof! You’re not helping, Floof!” Technoblade yells, Floof walking circles around Techno and Tommy, just entirely unaware of the struggle here and only interested in if anyone will be throwing a chew toy any time soon.

Within the minute, Techno is successfully captured by Tommy's efforts, and he's put on the couch between the two terror brothers, Tommy leaning just a little too much into Techno's shoulder in his anticipation to see Techno play a guitar like Wilbur.

"Okay, so it's really not all that hard, I taught myself to play a couple years back, and I'm fairly sure you'll do fine-" Wilbur rambles on, forcing the instrument into Techno's hands, adjusting his grip and paying no mind to the slight panic written over the man's face. He can deal. Playing a guitar is surely less difficult than making a zombie wall.

"Make him play the fast one!" Tommy suddenly says, referencing one of Wil's more upbeat songs, and Technoblade looks even more distressed. Wilbur struggles to not snort.

"We're on square one, Tommy." Wilbur reminds.

"So?"

"I literally just got the guitar in my hands." Techno points out.

"So?"

"Patience is key." Wilbur advises, and Tommy rolls his eyes so hard that both Techno and Wilbur snicker at the sight.

Despite Tommy's very high expectations, the most Wilbur gets Techno to do is a bit of strumming, teaching him a few chords underneath the rather intense stare of a seven-year-old. Wil does pay attention to Techno trying to learn, he does, but his attention also lingers onto his expression, trying to maybe spot out any hidden detail that he can pull out and mend.

There are none to find. Techno is reasonably content at the moment, a bit stressed-looking in how focused he is on getting the chords right, but overall, he seems calm. Wilbur doesn't find

any obvious problem in the furrow of his brow, nothing worrying enough to cause issue, and he begins to think maybe his concern was all for naught, simply the result of an overthinker.

Then Techno realizes that Phil has been watching the three of them from the kitchen doorway for the whole time. He pauses mid-strum, looking up like he's been caught in a crime, and Tommy whips his head over upon the action, lighting up at seeing Phil and running over to ask if he thinks Techno was doing good, or if Wilbur was better, or if he could play too, since Tommy is too tiny to play the guitar right-

Wilbur's glad he stays looking at Techno as Tommy leaves the couch. Techno seems happy all the way up until Phil's eyes look away, then his face- falters. There's a little shift in his eyes, something that makes Wilbur's heart fall a little, and he means to question it, he does, he nearly grabs Techno by the arm, but Techno gets up before Wil can make a move, putting the guitar to the side and walking away.

The subtle little reaction stews in Wilbur's mind for the better part of the hour. He ends up picking up the guitar again, trying to teach Phil a few of the same things he did to Techno, but his whole heart isn't really in it as it was before. He's not sure what to make of it. What if he's making a big deal out of nothing? He really doesn't *know* Techno. For all he's aware of, the guy woke up grumpy and that's literally the only thing weighing on him. But for all he knows, it could be more. It could be worse.

Wilbur's had his fair share of groups eating themselves up from the inside out before. Over time, he thinks he learnt to know when to jump ship before him and Tommy would get pulled into something. This isn't something he can jump from. This isn't a group that can burn up. Not like all the others. This is *different*.

He makes the choice to bring it up to Phil around mid-day. He stammers through the explanation of it, not sure how to honestly word it, but he gets his point across of feeling that Techno is seeming off. Phil takes in the information, and promises to talk it out with him and figure out what's going on.

An hour later, Phil calls Techno into the bedroom, and they have their own conversation there behind the closed door. Wilbur quietly practices his old songs on the living room couch, with Tommy curled up next to his leg. Wil plays softly enough that he can hear their voices when it begins to get raised, and he pauses playing altogether when he hears Phil begin to *yell*.

Tommy lifts his head with immediate concern, worry twisting up his face as he looks to Wilbur for guidance. “What’s going on?” He asks, and Wilbur doesn’t know what to say. He hears Techno yell back in response, angry and loud, and Tommy sits up straight. “Wilbur?”

“Stay- stay here.” He puts his guitar to the side, getting up from the couch and hesitating for a second just to make sure Tommy does stay in place. When Tommy doesn’t move, he walks into the hallway, meaning to go to the door and knock.

He’s saved from having to intervene when the door opens before he gets there, Techno storming out with a closed off mood all around him.

“Techno-?” Wil goes to ask, and Technoblade walks right past him, towards the kitchen.

“I’m making dinner.” He cuts Wil off, the tone somewhat defensive in its frigidness.

Wilbur watches his back with an almost baffled silence, then he quickly goes to the room, expecting to find Phil in the same upset air. He looks through the door to instead find Phil sitting on the bed, looking tired. He turns his attention to Wil when he hovers at the doorway, mouth opening and closing for some sort of explanation, then he heaves a sigh, and just shakes his head.

Wil’s lips turn into a deep frown, feeling like this has made something worse.

In the kitchen, Tommy creeps through the doorway, watching Techno prepare dinner with a charged energy to his movements. He’s doing it a little louder than usual, his shoulders a bit stiff, and Tommy shrinks in on himself with a bad feeling swimming through his stomach.

“What happened?” He asked, and Techno freezes at his voice, looking over his shoulder with his face stony.

“Nothing.” He snaps out at first, a touch too sharp. He seems to know it, and he takes a breath, speaking a little softer. “Just an argument.”

Tommy shifts his weight from foot to foot, seeing Techno move a little more slowly, but with the same stiffness as before. “Are you angry?”

Techno stops again. He turns to Tommy completely, hands leaving the counter, and at seeing the nervous look on the kid’s face, the anger bleeds out of him with a quiet sigh. He reaches an arm out. “Not at you.” He says, as Tommy comes close and automatically puts his arms up to be picked up off the ground. Techno indulges him without a complaint, resting him on his hip. “Never at you.” He promises, with as much sincerity he can manage.

“Are you angry at Phil?” Tommy asks, fisting his hands into the fabric of Techno’s shirt.

Techno hesitates on it for a second, avoiding his gaze as he looks back at the ingredients on the counter. “A bit.”

“Why? What were you guys arguing about?”

“We- I don’t want to talk about it, okay?” Technoblade says, and while he’s no longer cold with his words, he’s firm about it. Tommy frowns at the response, but he decides to not press.

“...okay.” He looks at the counter with Techno, kicking his legs with thought. “Can I help with cooking, then?”

Techno makes a tiny smile at the suggestion, and Tommy smiles right back. Technoblade puts him back on his feet, brushing a hand over his hair before nudging him in the shoulder to go towards the kitchen table. “Go pull a chair up.” He instructs, the first step always to letting Tommy give his assistance in the kitchen. Tommy pulls a chair as he’s told, excited to help, but even as he stands tall beside the counter, beginning to listen to Techno’s directions...he still feels like they should’ve talked about that a bit more. Even if Techno said he didn’t want to.

There is something tense within the air.

It's much later, by the next morning, when Phil confronts Techno in the bedroom again. The two of them had been indirectly avoiding each other the entire night before, so the mood is stilted when he comes in. Phil finds him by the open closet, picking through the shirts on the rack, and upon seeing him walk in, he slows in his movement, then turns to look at him with a dark gray hoodie held in his hands.

"Hey?" Phil greets, arms crossed over his chest in a way that looks more like he's trying to hold himself together. "Could I close the door?" He nods towards the doorway, where both Wil and Tommy's voices can be faintly heard from the kitchen.

Techno's eyes flick over towards the noise, his expression held carefully blank. "Depends." He looks down at the hoodie in his hands, turning it over to dig through the pockets. "Are we going to have a repeat of yesterday?"

Phil cringes. He's been regretting his words all night. Techno slept on the other side of the bed last night, which left Phil to stew in his own regrets for a bit, considering in his mind that while they had both been yelling, he was the one who raised his voice first. He made Techno walk right out. He wishes he had been a bit more careful about it.

"I won't yell." Phil promises.

Techno stares hard up at him, something upset trying to cling to his eyes, then he looks away, his expression softening easily. "I won't, either."

Phil can't help but make a little smile, something of relief in the breath that leaves his lungs. He reaches over and closes the door with a gentle click.

“I wanted to say I’m sorry. And start the conversation over. But mostly sorry, because I shouldn’t have just started yelling at you, even if I was angry.”

“Nah, I understand.” Techno waves it off, taking the apology and handing back a forgiveness that was already waiting. “I was being stubborn about it.” A beat of silence passes. He looks up. “...I’m still stubborn about it.”

Phil rolls his eyes, moving to sit on the bed with his hands clasped over the open space between his knees. “I’m not letting you go out there on your own, mate.”

“Well, I’m not letting you follow me.” Techno responds, set in his words. He’s pointedly avoiding Phil’s gaze now.

“Then- we need a compromise here.”

Techno shakes his head. “There is no compromise. You stay. I’ll go. I’ve been in hordes-”

“And so have I.” Phil interjects, having heard that point twice over already. “We know this. We can go together.”

“I don’t trust the way you go through hordes.” Technoblade says, and at Phil’s questioning look, he rephrases. “I don’t *like* the way you go through hordes.” That doesn’t feel like it explained much. *I don’t want you to be in a horde again* is left unsaid.

“Okay... So I’ll change the way I do it. What should I do instead?”

“Stay here?” Techno asks, so honestly pleading with it that Phil gives a sympathetic look in return.

“Not happening.”

“Then this conversation is suddenly over.” Techno turns away, Phil scoffing and standing to his feet.

“Technoblade.” He insists, coming up behind him to hold onto him by the shoulder. Techno stays looking into the closet, staring at nothing in particular. “You’ve got to work with me here.”

“There’s no compromise. There’s no meeting in the middle about this. I *don’t*” Techno pauses, collecting himself for a second. “I’m not...inclined, to let you go out when the streets are packed like this.”

Phil bites at his cheek for a second to keep his tone even. “Getting cornered isn’t an issue to me, Techno. I’ve had my instances of getting too close.”

“Precisely.” Technoblade mutters.

“And I turned out fine. I’ll be fine.” Phil stresses. “What do you want me to do? Other than stay here while you go and risk yourself, what can I do?”

Technoblade stares hard at something in the closet. Phil wonders if he’s just refusing to look at him because he knows the sight of Phil’s expression will make him lose.

“What do I *do*, Techno?” Phil forces a sense of gravity into the words, hoping it’ll get him to just speak and give an inch.

Techno opens his mouth as if he’ll answer, but nothing comes out. He squeezes the hoodie in his hands, blinking quickly down at the floor for a second, then he turns his head to Phil with a grimace

“You forgive me.”

“...what?” Phil asks, and the hoodie drops to the floor around the same time as Phil gets suddenly knocked sideways, more pushed than hit. He catches himself well enough to not bruise anything, but the suddenness of it makes him falter on getting back up, sitting on his knees with worried confusion. “Techno-?” He turns to look up, and sees Techno heading for the door, a backpack pulled from the closet now tugged securely over his shoulder, a sheathed sword held tight in his hand.

“Although, you can absolutely take your time with it, I’ll understand-” Technoblade calls out, and he swings the door shut with a very resolute clicking of a key in a lock following right after. Phil’s heart jumps into his throat, and he’s back on his feet within the second, running to the door.

“Technoblade-?!” He slams into it in his haste, trying the knob and finding it useless. It refuses to turn no matter how hard he pulls. “What are you doing, what are you- stop! Technoblade! Techno!”

“I’ll be back to deliver some supplies before sundown, and from there on, I’ll be out in the city, alright?” Techno says through the door, and Phil hits his fists against the wood, the hinges shaking underneath his anger. “I’ll work at the hoard till it thins out-”

“Techno, you open this fucking door!” He screams, and at hearing the shuffle of footsteps leave- “TECHNO!”

Tommy’s standing by the end of the hallway as Techno moves, and his eyes are wide when Techno comes near him, his expression looking all too cold. “What’s going on?” He asks, voice small, and Techno’s steps falter at his questioning face. “Tech-?”

“-TECHNOBLADE, YOU COME BACK HERE!” Phil’s voice echoes from across the hall, and Tommy twists his head with a surprised flinch. Techno takes the chance to silently slip past him, aiming for the kitchen and now finding Wilbur standing directly in the doorway.

“Uh.” Wil makes a half stumble at having Techno step close, but he doesn’t move out of the way, only suddenly concerned as to what is going on. “Phil?!” He calls out, without looking

away from Techno's face. Technoblade looks down at him with thin pressed lips, then he looks away as Phil cries out again, more furious than the last time.

"Wil, don't let him go out that damn *door!*" There's another slamming of fists on wood, with Tommy now choosing to run down the hall to try and help. "*Technoblade*, I swear to god I'm going to fucking *kill* you if you don't turn around and-!"

"Wha-" Wilbur's face scrunches up in a confused shock, then he looks down and takes in the sight of Techno's gear, the sword in his hand. His heart suddenly drops into his stomach. "What- What are you doing?" He asks, but he might know the answer already.

"We've been running low on food." Techno puts it simply, and Wil thinks a trace of Phil's anger rubs off on him in the moment, because he scoffs harshly, staring at Techno's face with a shake of his head.

"So you're going out into the horde? By yourself?" He asks incredulously, feeling the urge to grip the doorway and use his body as a roadblock until Phil finds himself free.

"Just for a supply run." Techno says gently.

Wilbur stands still, looking Techno in the eye. He tries to brace himself against the doorframe, dig his feet and stay right there, but Techno easily pushes past him, and Wilbur ends up reaching out and grabbing him by the arm.

"Wait-!"

Techno twists his wrist and somehow takes hold of Wilbur's arm instead, squeezing for a second with an honest sincerity to his words. "Watch over Tommy and Phil for me, I'll be back within- I'll be back." He then lets go and goes for the door, Floor trying to follow, only staying when Techno gives the command to sit.

“Techno-!” Wilbur freezes in place from sudden panic, not sure what to do. He can’t very well take Techno on in a fight, could he? What hope would he have at slowing the man down? Should he go and try and help Phil? Would Techno already be gone by then?

At that moment, Tommy comes running to follow Techno, trying to speed towards the door with his arms reached out. Wil stops him at the last second, and as Tommy shrieks, it’s only then Wil realizes he’s in near tears.

“Don’t let him leave, don’t let him leave!” Tommy cries, having apparently gotten the idea of what’s going on from Phil, realizing that Techno was meaning to go to the horde. “He’ll die if he leaves, he’ll die!” The sheer terror in his kid’s voice makes Wilbur realize the all too real possibility of that outcome, of Techno leaving now and never coming back. And for what? Because he hadn’t wanted them to be in danger? Because their food had just been *running low*?

A worried anger floods through Wilbur at the thought, flowing so quickly he’s choking on it. He drops to one knee in front of Tommy, taking him by the shoulders.

“Stay here. Help Phil.” He orders firmly, speaking fast, voice strained. “I’m going to get him before he gets out of the building.”

“You promise?” Tommy can’t help but ask, hands shaking with the sound of crashing down the hall, Phil probably trying to break down the door.

“I promise.”

Tommy hesitates for a split second, then nods, and in an instant Wilbur gets to his feet and goes out the door. Tommy in the meanwhile, frantically searches for anything to help Phil with his issue of his locked door.

The hallway is empty when Wil goes out, so he runs to the stairwell, relief washing through him at the sound of Techno’s footsteps echoing down below. He quickly follows, practically leaping past the flights of steps, gripping onto the railing for dear life to steady himself so he won’t go tumbling all the way down.

“Techno!” He calls as he runs, his own yell echoing back at him from the walls. The footsteps beneath him take a pause whilst Wilbur’s only seem to stomp louder.

“Get back upstairs, Wil!” Technoblade yells, and as he turns to look behind him, it’s then that Wil comes around the turn, not bothering to slow and instead using the whole momentum of coming down the few remaining steps to slam Techno right into the wall.

Techno’s sword clatters to the floor as he falls, disoriented at being shoved into concrete, and Wilbur stumbles to stay upright, panting for air as he steps back and stares down at Techno, who’s clutching the side of his head with a groan.

“What the *fuck*, Wilbur?” Techno blurts out, pushing himself onto his hands and knees, and Wilbur quickly snatches up his sword before he can pull himself together. He goes for his backpack next, yanking at it so ruthlessly that Techno has no choice but to give it up, his shoulder aching from the impact of the wall.

“Give this-” Wilbur huffs, holding the bag and the sword close to his chest, taking a large step back when Techno makes a half-hearted attempt to retrieve it. “You fucking idiot-!”

“What are you *doing*?” Techno asks desperately, holding a hand to his upper arm, wincing as he sits up. “Wil-”

“Me?!” Wilbur shrieks a little, cutting off Techno with a hint of hysterical laughter to his words. “I should be asking you that fucking question!”

“Wilbur-” Techno’s expression goes stern, but before he can even try and fail to convince Wilbur to give him his things back, there’s the slam of the heavy door above, two sets of footsteps coming into the stairwell.

“Wilbur!” Tommy calls, and Wilbur climbs up the steps, just enough to stay out of Techno’s reach, although, it doesn’t seem like Techno is really moving anywhere for the minute, seeing

as how Wilbur had shoved at him hard enough to leave him reeling a bit. Past the rightful fury, Wil feels vaguely guilty. Eh, he'll live.

"Here, down here! We're both here!"

Techno braces his hands against the ground like he means to force himself up onto his feet despite his pain, and Wilbur turns back to him with a piercing glare.

"If you get up, I'll fucking kick you." He threatens, and Techno's face is so suddenly baffled and scared, Wil would laugh if it were any other circumstance. "I *will*."

Tommy comes barreling down then, running into Wilbur in what he first thinks is a hug, only to find it's a robbery, the kid tearing the backpack and the sword from his hands and booking it back up the steps, not even glancing over his shoulder when Wilbur calls his name. Phil watches him run right past, returning the way they came, and at Wilbur's questioning look, he makes a nod for Wil to go follow him.

"You sure-?" Wilbur means to confirm, but he's already midway through running after his little brother, and Phil nods again.

Phil stays standing by the top of the stairs, staring down at Techno, who's admirably trying to sit upright in the face of the consequences to his actions. Wilbur gives him one last warning look, then heads off upstairs, calling Tommy's name again. Phil waits until he hears the door close, both Tommy and Wil having moved into the hall.

And then it's just them.

Phil doesn't even try to hide the deep-cut frown on his face, his breaths heavy in his lungs from the fading panic of wondering if he'd be too late. Technoblade tries to match his look, to no avail, because he only falters with each step Phil takes as he comes down the stairs. He's practically shrinking into himself by the time Phil's reached the bottom, standing in front of him with a glowering stare.

“You are going to get up. And come back upstairs.” Phil begins, and there’s no mistaking the quiet fury in his tone, a tense calm barely covering. “You are going to sit down, *apologize*, and we are making a better plan than this.”

Techno tries to shake his head. “I- I don’t *want* you to come with me-”

“That is not your decision to make!” Phil snaps out, and Techno jerks away from the response. “You can’t *make* the choice for me, you can’t choose to go and leave me behind-!”

“I wasn’t leaving you behind!” Technoblade denies. “I was- I was just trying to-”

“You locked me in a room. And then ran.” Phil deadpans, and Technoblade turns away. “Did you think I’d just stay after I eventually got out? That I wouldn’t follow you anyway, pack my own bag, go looking for you?”

“Wilbur and Tommy need you.” Technoblade defends.

“They need you too.” Phil counters, and Technoblade blinks up at him. “I need you.”

Techno’s eyes fall back down at Phil’s feet, his head dipping forward. Phil lets out a sharp breath, rubbing a hand to his face, pacing in a half circle.

“Techno-” Phil cuts himself off, the name hardly a whisper, but Technoblade flicks his eyes back up for a second anyway. “Why would you- Why would you *try* that?” Phil asks, and it’s less of a real question as to the reason why, more of a shaking plea for him to never scare him with it again. “Why would you-” Phil breathes out, and he stops the words, not even sure how to say it.

“You wouldn’t *listen*.” Technoblade chokes out, and Phil makes a stuttering exhale.

“What am I not listening to? What are you trying to say? Other than just telling me to stay put, and saying you can handle it instead, what are you trying to tell me?” Phil raises his arms up. “What’s the point of this?!”

Technoblade doesn’t answer. He looks to the floor with nothing but distress written over his face. He *wants* to put it into words, his worry, his fears, everything he’s ever thought, everything that’s ever plagued him, but-

He doesn’t know how.

All these weeks of living with the people he loves, and he feels like he’s back at the start, the only person alive in a dead, empty city, hoping for one single man to come back from the dead and tell him they’d be alright.

“I didn’t want you to-” Techno stammers over his words, shoulders hunching up to his ears. “I don’t-” Oh, what had he been thinking? He hadn’t been thinking much at all. Or maybe he was, but just about all the wrong things, all the bad memories that used to eat him up until he couldn’t recall the days.

Phil waits. Minute after minute drags on, and he waits, but Techno’s words all fail him underneath his gaze. Eventually it’s just silence that fills up his mouth.

“Enough.” Phil says at last, and he breathes in deep, head tilting back. “Just- enough. Let’s go upstairs, okay? We’ll sit down, and talk, and you-” He goes to help Techno up, stepping closer and leaning down to lift him by the arms, and he’s stopped in his sentence by Techno suddenly rising up on his knees and slamming into his middle, not as an attack in any way, but rather a desperate, impulsive hold of a hug.

His arms wind around Phil’s middle in a tight, frantic grip, and his face hides away into Phil’s shirt, his breaths coming short against his lower ribs. Phil is frozen at the action, and slowly,, ever so slowly, he goes to hold him in return, curling his palm around the back of his head.

“...Techno?”

“I can’t.” Techno’s voice breaks, and Phil’s head rings with bells as Technoblade’s words come muffled and quiet against his shirt. “-can’t do this again.”

Phil falters in being able to respond. He tries to pull Techno back to look him in the face, and he refuses to budge. “Technoblade?”

“I’m sorry.” Technoblade apologizes, sincere and honest in it, but it’s dull noise against Phil’s ears as his heartbeat picks up at the realization that Techno’s *crying*. He’s crying against his shirt, and he’s holding Phil so tightly that it’s reminiscent of how Tommy acted only a few days before, in his worry of Phil being bit, infected with only days left to live. “I’m sorry, I am. I just-”

“Hey.” Phil speaks gently, and he forces Techno’s head up, the ends of his hair brushing at his face at the angle they’re in. “Hey, what’s going on?”

Techno hesitates, just staring up at him. He looks exhausted. He looks terrified.

“Please tell me what’s going on.” Phil asks desperately, torn between keeping them here like this, or falling to the floor so he can embrace Techno properly, try his best to smooth out the furrow in his brow.

“I’m so scared.” Techno admits, his voice wavering in it, and Phil doesn’t want to hear this sort of fear from Techno ever again, because just the mere sound of it makes his chest ache. “I’m scared I’m gonna lose you again. I’m gonna wake up and it’s just gonna be me, you’re gonna die and I won’t be able to do anything again.”

“Oh.” Phil breathes out, his heart collapsing in on itself. “Oh, no, Techno-”

“I thought you were dead.” Technoblade goes on, needing to confess this, needing to let it be known. “The whole time, this whole *time*, I thought you were dead, and now I can’t- I just keep thinking about what’s going to happen if I don’t act fast enough. What if, this time-?”

“That’s not going to happen.” Phil cuts off the thought before it’s spoken. “That’s not going to happen, Techno. I’m here. I’m right here. Do you hear me?” He leans down close and squeezes Techno as tightly as he can, trying to burn that message into his skin. “I’m with you.” He promises, and Technoblade gives a hurt noise in the back of his throat.

“But you were gone.”

“Techno.”

“You were *gone*.”

“God, Techno.” Phil lowers himself down and sits on the floor with him, letting Techno lean into him so much that Phil’s nearly laying on his back with it. He keeps his arms over Techno’s shoulders, cheek pressed to the top of his head, and he makes his promises again and again, until it sinks in. Until they both know it. “We’re going to be okay. I won’t go anywhere. We’re both going to be okay.”

Technoblade’s sobs echo quietly up the stairwell.

“I swear it.”

Chapter End Notes

you ever think about how Techno's zombie wall was sooo a coping strategy like lol hardcore survivor going insane on the zombies!! but also one survivor who's so Angry at the world deciding to just keep killing and killing until the bodies pile high that it makes a wall that keeps the world out so he can be by himself and just maybe try to heal a little

but also he's just cracked like that like LOL

you will be brothers! this is a threat. It's happening. It's on its way. Do not resist!

Chapter Notes

I'm not dead WHO CHEERED!!

here you go, a good 5k to end the drought. I also updated like. four other fics. I was busy. I'm hoping to get a bit of a PUSH in updates rn bc I have the plot points pretty nicely laid out, but alas. Procrastination. And life! I go to college and am learning to drive and am getting a job and all that stuff blah blah blah who CARES LETS GET TO THE BROTHERS!!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Tommy!” Wilbur yells, chasing after with half his heart still stuck in his throat.

A part of him worries on if they really should have left Techno and Phil by themselves in the stairwell. On one hand, he does trust Phil to bring him back, by any means necessary, but on the other, Techno isn't someone to underestimate. If he thinks going out there is something he has to do, there is very little to stop him.

But Wilbur thinks he's made a good effort in preventing it from going too far, and with Phil being left to the task of bringing him back-- it'll turn out okay. It will.

At the very least, Techno not having any supplies will effectively sway his decision there. The bag stays firmly held in Tommy's grip, the kid continuing to book it down the hallway, nearly slamming into the door in his haste to get inside their apartment. Wilbur is right on his heels as they go in, his hands trying to grab at the back of Tommy's shirt to slow him down.

“Tommy!” He calls again, the kid slipping out from his fingers, running through the kitchen with frantic, speeding steps. He almost trips around the edge of a kitchen chair, and Floof watches the passing commotion with a sudden burst of barking, caught up in the clear distress radiating all throughout the air. “Tommy, *stop* !” Wil insists, forcing his tone to be stern.

Tommy stumbles to a halt in the middle of the living room, head spinning around, looking for something. “We need- we-” He tries to say, his eyes wide and watery, lips curled in a trembling frown, and in the hesitation, Wilbur manages to grab onto his shoulder at last, dropping to his knees.

“Tommy, Tommy.” He repeats, turning his head to get Tommy to look him in the face.
“Tommy, stop-”

“We need to hide it!” Tommy cuts him off, sounding desperate. “You need to- Wilbur, help me hide it! Please!”

“What? What are you-?” Wilbur tries to ask, confused as to what he’s trying to do. Tommy starts again in his panic, trying to pull away from him to rush into the hallway, and Wilbur takes hold of his wrist, not letting him go. “Stop, stop, Tommy-”

“No!” Tommy shrieks, shaking his head, yanking at Wilbur’s hold so that he can go. “No, no, we need to hide it! Help me *hide* it!”

“Why would we hide it?” Wilbur asks, reaching out and grabbing the bag with his other hand, pulling it closer, and in doing so, pulling Tommy closer. Tommy suddenly shoves the bag forward in getting pulled, Wilbur getting hit in the chest with the supplies.

“So he can’t leave!” Tommy explains, his line of thinking finally clicking into place for Wilbur. Techno would be an idiot to try heading out into the horde without any supplies. If they hide the bag, Technoblade would then not be able to leave.

But it’s not quite so simple as that, and besides the importance of the bag, Wilbur doesn’t think that Techno is going to immediately come up for it and try running again. Regardless, he knows Tommy doesn’t care for such logic. All that he is doing is trying to ease desperate fear, prevent the worst from happening.

“Okay.” Wilbur nods, Tommy gasping in small, short breathes, tears brimming in his eyes.
“Okay, we’ll hide it. Let’s hide it.”

“Where?” Tommy asks, looking for Wilbur to take the lead now.

Wilbur stands to his feet and looks around the room, thinking of where indeed. Where is somewhere that Techno wouldn't think to look? Where is somewhere that's good enough to put this bag, to calm down Tommy with ensuring they've prevented Techno from being able to leave?

“Outside.” Wilbur says, taking Tommy's hand and pulling him over to the front door, out into the hallway. Floof barks at their backs, maybe out of worry, maybe a sort of demanding question, and Wilbur ignores the noise. He goes to the apartment next door and tries the handle, finding relief in it being unlocked. Tommy tosses it in and hurriedly shuts the door with a slam, looking down the hallway with caution, as if Techno will hear it and know exactly where to find it.

“There. It's hidden.” Wilbur reassures, pushing Tommy away, trying to get him back to the apartment. “We hid it, Tommy. He's not gonna find it.”

“Where's Techno?” Tommy asks him, attention glued to the stairway door at the end of the hall.

“Phil is with him.” Wilbur answers. “He's going to bring Techno back up, any moment now. They're probably talking, since Phil was-” Pissed off. Angry beyond measure. Wilbur feels mildly sure that Technoblade is getting chewed out right now for locking that man in the bedroom.

“Are you sure?” Tommy questions, head tilting towards him as if to look at him, but his gaze refusing to leave the hall. His relief is short-lived, concern bleeding back into his expression, hands reaching up to hold onto Wil's fingers. “He's- he's coming back, right?”

“Phil's got him.” Wilbur insists, believing that with his entire heart. Phil's got it. Phil will make it better. “Come on. We- we need to go calm down Floof. He's probably a bit scared right now.” He tells Tommy, trying to guide him back, to distract him into the apartment. It works decently enough, Tommy moving his feet with Wil's hands on his shoulders.

“Floof?” Tommy calls, moving to the front door that they left open. The dog is laying in the kitchen with its head lifted up, alert. It barks at them like an accusation. “Floof, it’s ok. We hid Techno’s bag and Dad’s going to go get him. It’s okay.”

Tommy slowly kneels down to the ground to take the dog into his arms, his fur seeming too much against his sleeves. Wilbur hovers close behind him, leaning down with his hand staying at his shoulders, never letting go, making sure Tommy knows he’s near.

“It’s going to be okay, Floof.” Tommy says, the words more for them than the dog, maybe. Wilbur grimaces at hearing the shaky tone in his little brother’s voice, and he checks over his shoulder to look at the door, straining to hear anyone coming close. He knows Phil’s got it. Phil will come back, Techno will be back, and they’ll figure this out.

They’re just going to have to wait.

Crouching down at Tommy’s side, Wilbur joins him in comforting the dog, giving slightly hesitant pets to the top of its head. Floof is happy for the attention, panting a bit in stress, and Wilbur feels the same. They sit there with the mood mellowing down, Wilbur’s heart settling in his chest, Tommy’s breathing slowing as he blinks the threat of tears away.

When they finally do hear the shuffle of footsteps coming down the hall, Wilbur turns his head to see them come to the door, while Tommy stands to his feet and gives a great, furious yell.

“ *TECHNOBLADE* !” He screams, the dog standing up suddenly in the shift of mood, Wilbur jolting at the sudden shout. Both Phil and Techno speed up in their walk to the door, Techno rounding the corner with a look of worry, Phil pressed to his heels.

“Techno-” Wilbur goes to say, pushing himself to his feet, and Tommy beats him to it, stalking over to Techno’s legs, hitting his fists at the front of his stomach.

“You! You! You!” He cries out, Techno taking a step back at the attack, eyes wide at the display. He glances back at Phil as if looking for advice, then looks to Wil as if hoping for help. Wilbur doesn’t have much to offer. He notes that Techno’s eyes look a bit puffy. Was he- crying?

“Tommy-” Phil tries to say, and he stops abruptly as Tommy gives a quiet hiccup in his words, Techno going even more still, hands midair in surrender.

“You, you-” Tommy falters as quickly as he started up, all his anger fizzling out with his hands instead now trying to cling to Techno’s shirt. He pulls at the fabric, twists his fingers in, tilting his head up while standing on his toes, trying his hardest to stay close. “Techno-” He ends up saying, voice breaking midway through.

“I’m here.” Technoblade reassures, leaning down into Tommy, holding his hands out with an unsure air to them, as if wanting to hold the kid close but not knowing if it’s okay. “It’s- it’s alright, I’m here.”

“No.” Tommy shakes his head, eyes squeezed shut, face screwed up in distress. Wil makes a half-step forward, nearly reaching out. “You left. You left us, you- you *scared* me.” Tommy says, fingers pulling harder at the end of Techno’s shirt as he takes a few steps back, Techno leaning with him, not daring to even resist. “Why would you do that?!” Tommy yells.

“I wasn’t- trying to.” Techno chokes out, sounding as if the attempt of speaking hurts his throat. His hands graze over the side of Tommy’s arms as he crouches down to Tommy’s level, his knees hitting the floor. “That wasn’t- I wasn’t trying to scare you. I was-”

“But you *did* . Why?!” Tommy asks, tears making themselves known. When Techno can’t answer fast enough, he begins to repeat it, the anger rising back up, his fists hitting at Techno’s chest, now. “Why! Why!”

“Tommy. Tommy, I-” Techno grabs onto the kid’s wrists to stop him, trying to gather his own response. “I worry a lot about you. I was worried about all of you.” He says, Tommy frowning sourly with his lip jutting out. “I just wanted to keep you safe.”

“By *scaring* us?”

“No. No, that’s not-”

“Because you did. You’re not- you can’t just leave.” Tommy says, a fit of tears shaking his shoulders as he grits his teeth through his words. “If you want to- keep us safe, you have to stay. You can’t make us safe if you don’t *stay* !”

“I won’t go. I’m not going.” Technoblade promises, holding Tommy’s hands together, pressing them to his heart, almost willing him to grab on again, to cling so tight that he won’t even get the chance to leave the room. “I’ll stay, I’m staying. I’m sorry. I’m- Tommy, I’m sorry. I’m staying.”

“You were-” Tommy snuffles hard and looks Techno right in the eye, breathing deeply in an effort to keep a bit of composure. “You were gonna-” He looks at Technoblade as if searching for something. Honesty, maybe? Regret? Whatever it is, he finds it, and he breaks down then, head slumping forward as he falls into Techno’s arms, wrapped up into a hug with Techno’s face looking nothing short of terrified over his shoulder. Wilbur supposes it’s a deserved emotion. This can be his consequence, the guilt of making their baby brother cry. He knows it must cut deep.

Wilbur stands still in the middle of the kitchen, Floof circling his legs as Techno stands and carries Tommy in his arms, walking further inside. Phil closes the door behind them both and steps beside Techno with a hand squeezing his arm for a moment, Techno looking at him with his chin pressed to the top of Tommy’s head. They seem to share a mutual thought, in such a look. Wilbur wonders what it means.

“Phil?” Wil asks quietly, Phil turning his head away to put attention towards him. “Is- Did you both sort things out?” He asks hesitantly, his hands fidgeting in front of him as he glances back and forth between the two of them.

“Yeah. Somewhat.” Phil replies, and it’s not all that reassuring with the flat tone he makes it with. “We need to all talk.” He looks to Techno again, something vulnerable in his gaze, and Techno avoids the look, moving ahead to take Tommy with him to the couch, Floof trotting along with his snout raised high in concern.

Tommy whines into Techno's shoulder in such a way that Wilbur's nerves are screaming, uncomfortable in the need to come close and soothe whatever hurts. He yanks at Techno the collar of Techno's shirt for a second as they sit down, refusing to be let go, even just a little, and Technoblade keeps his head pressed to Tommy's, hands nearly shaking over his back.

It's too much. Techno loves him too much, cares about them all too much, so much that it hurts. All he wants is to keep this safe, and in doing so, it hurts them. What can he do? He feels helpless to it all, desperate in failure and regret, and he clings to Tommy with the wish that he could keep all the dangers of the world out of this room, of this home. Their home.

Phil and Wilbur sit next to him with their weights sinking into the couch. Floof sits by Wilbur's feet, snout pushing at Techno's knee, trying to get his attention. Techno leans forward a little, throat tight. He feels pathetically fragile. Standing to his feet and wiping his eyes wasn't enough, it felt only like a breather, Phil's presence at his side easing only the very worst of his fears.

It's all wanting to eat him alive, now, Tommy's cries in his ears, guilt pooling in his stomach until he's sick with it. He breathes hard, tries to shush Tommy in something comforting, unsteady hands brushing down his curls, and he can feel Phil leaning into him, arm wrapped over his back. His eyes sting, and he keeps them closed, half his face hidden into Tommy's hair.

"We-" Techno clears his throat, trying to speak. "You said we should- talk." He says to Phil, glancing over to him, the worry on his expression too much to bear.

Phil breathes in, hand traveling up Techno's back to rest on his shoulder, and then he puts his palm on the back of Techno's neck, pulling him and Tommy close as a sort of hug. "In a bit." He speaks softly, his other hand touching at the side of Tommy's arm. Tommy's quieter in crying now, but he still snuffles as he shifts in Techno's arms, his hand moving outwards to reach at Wil.

Wil takes Tommy's hand without a word, and rests his head onto Techno's shoulder with him, their heads sitting close, Tommy turning to look his brother in the eyes. Wilbur smiles, maybe a touch bitterly, but still with love all the same. There is safety here, with Techno and Phil beside them, and there is kind comfort in the way Tommy tries to smile back, just glad that he

won't be left behind, left to wonder if Techno will be okay, if he'll return. Like how he was left to wonder with Wil.

They stay there in each other's company until it's easier to breathe. Only once the worst of it has settled, does Phil finally speak.

"We're running low on supplies." He says outright, the other three tensing up at the fact of it. Tommy twists around in Techno's arms, looking at Phil with a frown. "There's no way around that. One way or another, we're going to need to get more."

"From- from the storagehouse?" Tommy asks, hesitant in thinking about the horde outside.

"It's not far, is the thing. Me and Techno can go in there quickly enough and get what we need without problem, I'm sure." Phil nods. "Techno." He says, making sure he's looking directly at him. "Whatever you think is needed for us to stay safe out there, I'll do it. But I will come with you. We are both going, and we'll come right back. Just for a supply run. Okay?"

Technoblade nods slowly, Wilbur leaning forward. "And with clearing out the horde?" He asks.

"Later. After." Phil insists, shaking his head. "We have *time*. Once we resupply, there isn't any need to rush. We'll plan it out. We'll be careful."

"Okay." Technoblade agrees, blinking hard for a moment, as if trying to focus. Tommy lets his head fall into Techno's shirt again, curling close to him. "Okay. We'll do that. We'll..." He trails off, Phil smiling at him in a way that's so painfully and wonderfully familiar. A bit of fear eases up at last.

"We're not doing *anything* right now." Tommy demands, grabbing onto Techno's hair and yanking lightly on his braid. Techno winces, Phil automatically reaching up to try and help. "We're all gonna stay here, and- And we're all gonna stay!"

“Yes, yes, we’ll stay-” Wilbur agrees, leaning in to take Tommy’s hand off Techno’s braid, Techno getting pushed into Phil with his weight. “No one is going yet.”

“Good!” Tommy nods, and he yanks at Wilbur next, Wil falling further, making them all lean oddly on the couch like dominoes toppling down.

“Okay, okay.” Phil laughs lightly, arm behind him to keep him somewhat upright. He has a passing thought of suggesting they just head to bed for now, end the day early and let them settle, for it’s not like they’re going to do anything else anytime soon-- and then he remembers something. “Oh.”

“...Oh?” Techno echos, curious at the tone.

“Oh?” Wilbur also repeats.

“Oh.” Tommy says, just to keep the bit going.

“Uh-” Phil snickers a little with the three of them, scooting back with a sheepish look. “I broke the bedroom door.”

“Oh, yeah.” Tommy says, having fully witnessed that. “He, like- *destroyed* it-”

“What do you mean you *broke* the door?” Techno asks, seeming mildly concerned.

“Well, how else was I supposed to get out of the room?” Phil asks back, a bit of bite in his tone. “Since I was *locked* in there-”

“-like, there were pieces *all* over-” Tommy continues, waving a hand out to emphasize.

“I had my reasons-” Technoblade tries to defend, shrinking a bit into himself.

“Shit reasons.” Phil snaps back, Techno grimacing.

“I’m investigating this.” Wilbur announces, pulling himself from the couch and away from Tommy’s hand clinging to his shirt, going over to the hallway to look down towards the bedroom door. He stops in his tracks, spine straightening up. “What- What the fuck.”

“Is it like, just the lock, or-?” Techno asks, Tommy beginning to laugh, for he knows the truth of the damage. Phil sucks in air through his teeth upon having Wilbur stare at him with a baffled expression.

“What the fuck, Phil?! Are you *okay* ?!”

“I’m fine! I mean, the real question here is- do we really *need* a door-?” Phil says to Techno, his friend eyeing him with more and more concern as Wilbur walks into the hallway, yelling back at them.

“It’s off the *hinges* , what the fuck-!”

Tommy cackles, Technoblade opening his mouth to try and say something, and only ending up laughing along with him, Phil grinning alongside Wilbur’s swearing at the fact they’ve now got bits of wood scattered across their hallway.

They make their plans over breakfast the next day, the supply run planned for the day right after. As much as it hurts to make it so soon, it’s true that they need supplies. Food is running low, and they shouldn’t risk it so much to the point they’re needing to ration.

Techno lays out rules for Phil. No getting bit, not even once, no fighting recklessly. Phil, in return, insists they stick to each other’s side at all times. They stay close.

With that compromise settled, they then discuss the idea of wearing layers to prevent zombies getting a bite down, if they do get a bit too near. They go through the coats and jackets in the closet, Techno pulling out gloves from one of his drawers, and in talking about avoiding the zombies, the topic also rolls into the eventual clearing out of the horde, too. Techno mentions some stash of fireworks, to help draw out the zombies. Tommy seems positively ecstatic at the idea of using explosives on the zombies. Phil has to clarify that the explosions go into the sky, not at the zombies.

Wilbur takes in their plans with a comfort in the way Techno and Phil are agreeing on doing it together, but he feels a need to put his hand in as well. To at least try and protect.

Technoblade's tidying up the kitchen later that evening when Wilbur approaches him.

In the slight noise of plates clinking against each other, Techno wiping off stains to the best of his ability, he hears Wil's voice speak up behind him, not entirely out of nowhere, since he did hear the shuffle of his steps.

"I want you to teach me how to shoot."

Techno stops what he's doing, caught in a moment of wondering if his ears misheard. He lowers his hands into the sink before looking over his shoulder and seeing that- yup, it was in fact Wilbur who's said that to him. He was partially convinced it was just Tommy sounding funny.

"What?" Techno says, blinking at Wil with a slight scrunch to his face.

Wilbur raises his shoulders in a ghost of a shrug, walking closer through the kitchen. "You have guns to spare. An extra precaution never hurts." Techno's hackles immediately rise up at thinking he's asking to head on the supply run with them, and Wilbur quickly speaks to clarify. "I won't go out with you guys- I think I'd be more of a liability than a help-- but you have a roof. I can see the whole street from up there." He points a finger up to the ceiling, and Technoblade recalls then the view of the horde, the sight he shared with Phil of the whole occupied street. "Teach me how to shoot, and I can give you two backup."

“Have you ever even held a gun before?” Technoblade asks, not meaning to be cruel, just genuinely curious. He reaches for the towel to wipe off his hands, and Wilbur crosses his arms with a huff.

“I’m not entirely helpless, Techno. I’ve shot zombies. I’ve just never stuck to having loud bullets as my weapon of choice.” Especially with having Tommy under his wing, during those first months. Catching attention with such noise was something to avoid. They stuck to hiding and staying out of the way when they ran out of ammo.

“Huh.” Technoblade leans back against the counter, a considering expression crossing his face. He looks at Wilbur as if weighing the options, and Wilbur raises his brows. “You ever shoot with a rifle?” He asks, an offer clear as day.

Wilbur hesitates for a second, then drops his arms, shaking his head as an answer. Techno is hardly dissuaded. A small grin forms on his face as he pushes off the counter, moving past Wil to grab his gun and find the extra ammo. Wilbur follows at his back, suddenly a bit nervous.

Within a few minutes, Wilbur’s taking the rifle handed to him and slinging it over his shoulder, Techno holding the box of bullets in one hand, the two of them already having their shoes on. They go over to the bedroom to grab a jacket, at Techno’s insistence, and to tell Phil and Tommy where they’re heading.

“Me and Wil are going up to the roof.” Techno announces to the two of them laying on the bed, Tommy’s crayons and papers circling them, a lantern sitting bright on the edge of the mattress. They turn their head to follow Techno as he makes a beeline to the closet, tossing the box of bullets onto the bed so he can pull on a hoodie.

“For what?” Phil asks. He sits up in where he is, cautious to not let any crayon roll underneath him, and Tommy doesn’t so much as sit up with him, if rather, drags himself to lay his upper half on Phil’s legs, so he’s partially lifted up from the bed. Phil pays the weight on his legs no mind.

“I’m gonna give an extra eye on the roof when you guys go out tomorrow.” Wilbur explains, Phil’s eyebrows going up in surprise. Wilbur points a thumb out to Techno as he joins back at Wil’s side, the box of bullets back in his hand. “Techno’s going to teach me how to shoot.”

“I wanna learn how to shoot!” Tommy chimes in, pushing his hands against Phil’s knees to sit up taller.

“No.” Both Wilbur and Techno say in unison, Tommy immediately wilting back down, splaying himself across Phil’s legs like a dying boy. Phil makes a fond huff, hand patting pityingly on his back.

“This gun is too big for you, anyway, you wouldn’t be able to aim with it.” Techno points out. Tommy just makes a grumpy noise in response, not caring for such logic. He wants a gun. He wants to shoot a gun. Why does Wilbur get to do it before him? Because he’s bigger? Well, Tommy’s manlier. That should be plenty of good reason enough to give him the chance to shoot zombies first.

“It’s late. You should be getting ready for bed, anyhow.” Wilbur bargains, walking over and using his wise older brother tone to coerce Tommy into not making too much of a fuss. He picks up the lantern to move it to the nightstand as Tommy gives a scoff past his lips.

“I’m not even *tired* .” Tommy denies, rolling his eyes at Wil. He scoots back over to his crayons and paper, laying on his stomach with his arms stretching out, and in the motion, a yawn suddenly escapes through his throat, contradicting his words. Techno snorts at the sight.

Wilbur only smiles, stepping close and leaning down so he can kiss Tommy on the head. Tommy makes a little face, pretending to be bothered, but secretly pleased at the attention. “Keep dad company, okay?” Wil says, and Phil smiles warm, a hand reaching out to brush Tommy’s hair back. Tommy tilts his head back with Phil’s hand, looking at him with a scrunch of the nose before then looking back to Wil.

“Okay.” He agrees plainly, somewhat appeased. “Shoot some zombie heads for me.”

“Gladly.” Wilbur nods, standing up straight and readjusting the gun on his shoulder before going to follow Techno out the door.

It’s a nice temperature up on the roof. Slightly chilly, but not too bad with Wil’s coat keeping him warm. Both him and Techno stay leaning up against the ledge, the stone cold against Wil’s hip, the horde below spread out across the whole block.

It just keeps going. Wilbur stares off into the street in wonder, seeing the constant shuffling movement of the bodies beneath them. How are they ever going to clear this out? Techno seems so confident about it, hardly concerned, and sure, he did it himself in the first time around, but this-

The rifle fires out again in Techno’s hands, the bullet zipping down and striking a zombie in the shoulder. He gives a disappointed click of his tongue at the sight, lifting his head up from where he was aiming, and Wilbur huffs with his elbows pushing off from the edge.

“A half-point? You’re never going to win at that rate.” Wilbur jokes sarcastically, knowing full well Techno’s miles ahead in points, so much so that Wil’s honestly not trying to win the game anymore. He’s just trying to practice.

“The sun was in my eyes.” Technoblade defends, passing the rifle over. Wilbur holds back the urge to laugh, glancing at the moon in the sky. “The glare, it’s- my sight-”

“Oh, your impaired vision-”

“Yeah, exactly.”

“If only it was night.” Wilbur deadpans, aiming the rifle down, and Techno turns away with a snort. Wilbur smiles as he tries to find a decent slow-moving target.

He's not sure how long they've been playing up here. Techno let him shoot by himself for the first few bullets, Wilbur getting the hang of the rifle easily enough. It wasn't terribly complicated. It was, however, oddly awkward in the silence of Wilbur trying to fire down random zombies, so they ended up making a point system, passing the gun back and forth, and Techno's been absolutely destroying him from the first round.

A headshot is a full point. A hit anywhere else is a half-point. A miss is nothing. Wilbur's lost count of the tally already, but Techno's only missed a zombie's head once, so he's fairly sure the man has got a decent lead.

"You should try and get that one by the corner." Techno suggests, pointing his finger out somewhere.

"Which one?"

"The, uh... The one without an arm."

"Like- one-fourth of them are missing an arm, man." Wilbur says, but he thinks he knows which one Techno is talking about. He lines up the rifle with a zombie on the road, hoping he won't aim too high and hit some other zombie behind them.

"I don't think it's one-fourth, exactly, it's more like- well, what are we considering a missing arm? The partial loss of the flesh? The bones? Or-"

"A missing arm." Wilbur says, lifting his head for a second to give Techno a look. "An arm that is missing."

"They're all missing something." Technoblade points out.

“I’m not missing.” Wilbur says, then he shoots, and thankfully does not miss, hitting the zombie in the neck. “Fuck.” He still swears, for they’ve already established a neck is not a head. Half-point.

“Hah.” Techno teases, Wilbur pushing the rifle at him with a bit more pushiness than needed. “It would’ve been great if you just entirely missed the shot-”

“But I did *not* .” Wilbur interrupts, leaning his elbows onto the ledge, watching Techno check the rifle and crouch down to reload it. “Should we be using up the whole box?” He asks, slightly worried if they’re wasting this with the practicing.

“I have literally *so much* ammo.” Technoblade reminds, waving off the concern. “Granted, a good chunk of it is in my storage, but I’ll pick up some when me and Phil go out tomorrow. I still have some more on the apartment floor as well, in one of the other rooms.”

“The benefits of taking over a city.” Wilbur murmurs.

“Yup.” Techno says, popping the p, and finishes reloading and stands to his feet, aiming fast and firing nearly right away. He hits a zombie in the head. “Nice.” He grins, Wilbur frowning at the unfairness of Techno having such good aim. It makes sense, for someone who probably had plenty of time to polish his skills when taking out the entire zombie population of the city, but still.

He takes the rifle as Techno hands it over, and leans it onto the ledge with a hum. “What supplies are you going to be grabbing?”

Technoblade raises his brows in question. “Phil’s shared the list with you.”

“Well, yeah, I saw that.” Wilbur nods, thinking of the list written in pen, attached to the fridge right now, like a list for the grocery store. “But what’s the order? What’s priority? You know how your shit is organized, so how are you going about that while zombies are climbing through the door?”

“Uhg, I just remembered there’s still bodies on the floor in between my shelves.” Techno says, sounding mildly annoyed. Wilbur finds a bit of amusement in it, and Techno sighs, standing straight with his hands to the ledge before answering Wil’s question. “The matter of it is just getting inside, and we can close and barricade the door from there, let you pick off the persistent ones while we can stock up however we want, in reasonable amounts.” He thinks for a second, glancing up at the sky. “I should probably grab another pack of printer paper, actually. Tommy’s pile is starting to run low.”

“Speaking of.” Wilbur says, heart warm at Techno even thinking of that. He pulls the rifle from the ledge to just hold it firm in his hands, barrel pointed down. “Tommy has- He’s been calling Phil dad.”

Technoblade doesn’t say anything for a beat, the silence suddenly sitting heavy. “He has.” He responds quietly.

“...I’ve been...calling him dad, too.” Wilbur gets out, feeling a passing sense of embarrassment in admitting it. He keeps his head pointed straight ahead, and carefully looks at Techno out of the corner of his eye. “Do you mind it?”

Techno frowns in an outright confusion, turning to Wilbur with a baffled look. “Why would I mind it?”

“You’ve known Phil longer. And with us calling him that, it-” Wil fiddles with his rifle, hearing it click lightly. He tilts his head to the side with a half-shrug. “I don’t know. It makes us like a family.”

He feels like they’re family, by now. He feels like this can turn out good, as long as he keeps it as such. Tommy wants nothing more than for all of them to stay together. Wilbur is happy to give him all he wants. Happy to ensure he’ll have that for the rest of his days, if he so wishes.

“Does that make me the estranged uncle?” Techno tries to joke. It comes out kinda weak, and Wilbur pretends to be thoughtful, humming accordingly.

“Well,” He says, keeping his tone light, a smile trying to pull at his lips. “Tommy’s been wanting another brother.”

Technoblade doesn’t move for a solid ten seconds. He looks at Wilbur, and Wilbur looks back at him, and grins a little wider at the expression on Techno’s face. “...huh?”

“He’s been wanting another brother.” Wilbur repeats. “Dad’s said so.”

“Uh, well- that’d make me your brother, too.” Techno points out, as if trying to remind Wil.

“That’s a sacrifice I’m willing to make.” Wilbur answers simply, then he fires a bullet through a zombie's head.

Technoblade misses his next shot.

Chapter End Notes

Techno is actually the overprotective brother in this family but he only ever shows it like at the last minute he will be so chill and then all of a sudden he's like "I need to put my life on the line for yours NOW" and everyone is like "STOP IT"

he's honestly going to get a bit overbearing in the next chapters lol he means well he's also just very worried about his family all the time and he usually is in denial about any bad feelings he has so that's probably bad for his bloodpressure ANYHOW

Nothing bad will happen on the supply run. That sounds ominous LMAO but I am like dead serious, it's so plot convenient to have a ohhhh NOOO angst moment!! on the supply run but like. Let's be real. We are here for the family bonding. IM here for the family bonding. No one is dying anytime soon. relax. (Unless I spontaneously change my mind and crave pain but heyyy!!)

thanks for reading! change fate enjoyers hang in there that story is beating my ass. sumw enjoyers. rejoice in the comment section. Let us feel the rain at last.

also random edit in this note: I think I'm gonna stick to a monthly update schedule now?? it sounds appealing. basically I'm thinking I'm gonna be writing for the whole of the month and then upload all of what I've made on the first of the next. I dunno. we

shall see. if you want updates on that or just wanna see me scream loudly over my writing process, follow my Tumblr. I yell a lot on there (@sircantus)

no im not stalling SHUT UP YOUR FAVORITE CHANNEL IS ON

Chapter Notes

would you believe me if this entire chapter was supposed to be one short scene. I don't even know what happened. I was supposed to get to the supply run bit. and then fluff kicked me in the face. and then i was like well now i don't wanna write the supply run bit. so here we are. have fun

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Never has Phil ever thought that the sound of echoing gunshots could somehow sound comforting, but as he sits here in the company of Tommy sitting by his legs, the room dim, muffled bangs coming periodically from outside, up on the roof-

He feels rather calm.

He feels content, more than anything. There's a lingering dread that comes for the idea of tomorrow, but in such a world like this, there's always the dread of tomorrow. Phil's used to that. It's the soft enjoyment he's not sure how to stomach. Sometimes it just sits a little too heavy.

Part of him wants to fidget in where he sits, leaned up against the headboard, one of Tommy's crayons poking him from where it sits lodged underneath his calf. He wants to do something other than just lie here, wants to go prepare for the dreadful tomorrow.

But then there comes the ringing sound of a gun being shot, and the dread eases up as he thinks of Techno up on that roof, aiming carefully with Wilbur squinting at the target. He finds relief at the idea of them finding their common ground at last, forming some sort of bond, although, with Tommy, it's not as if there was ever going to be any other outcome. At the very least, Phil is just glad Techno will have one more person at his back. He deserves that much.

Another gunshot rings out. Phil glances over towards the window as if he'll catch a glimpse of the bullet landing. Tommy makes a long, loud huff, air sputtering from his lips. Phil looks back at him with a curious, bewildered smile.

"Are you finished?" He asks, leaning his head a bit forward, trying to catch a glimpse of Tommy's paper. There's a mix of green and yellow and an odd peach color, and then Tommy's hand is slapping down over it, Phil's view blocked.

"No! You said you weren't moving!" Tommy protests, and Phil leans back into his spot, fingers lifted up for a moment from his lap as a little signal of surrender.

"I'm not moving."

"You just moved."

"I'm right back where I was. Continue on." Phil insists gently.

"Hmph." Tommy's lip curls in a frown, and he swipes up a blue crayon as if it's personally insulted his brother. He flops himself down onto his elbows, no longer hunching over as he was before, and he stares hard at the drawing before him, as if trying to pick out what details are missing. "Hmmm." His frown curls harder, and he pokes at the paper, a gunshot ringing outside once more.

"Are you nearly done?" Phil asks, honestly a bit curious as to how it's coming out. Tommy has an interesting way of art when he puts his mind to it.

"No." Tommy spits out, and he jabs the crayon into the paper as another gunshot echoes above. It looks like he's stabbing the drawing, rather than adding onto it. Phil can't help but give a slightly concerned look, brows furrowing together.

Tommy glances up towards him, blue eyes squinting together in focus. He scrunches his nose.

“You’re not smiling.” He says, an offended accusation.

“Ah, sorry.” Phil apologizes, offering a small smile so as to be the perfect drawing subject. Tommy’s expression only goes even tighter, like he’s eaten an entire lemon whole. “Is that better?” Phil asks, wondering if he’s somehow smiling wrong.

“I guess.” Tommy says. He jabs at his drawing a bit more. Picks up a green crayon. A gunshot rings out. He scribbles hard, enough to make the paper wrinkle against where it sits on the blanket of the bed. “Hmm.”

“It’s alright if it’s not perfect.” Phil tries to reassure, wondering if this is a matter of too high expectations. Tommy’s never attempted a portrait before. He’s drawn them, yes, he’s drawn his brothers and he’s drawn Phil and he’s drawn Floof with all the imaginations of a child-like mind, but maybe that’s a bit different than actually having the reference sitting right in front of you.

“It’s fan *tastic* .” Tommy insists, almost sounding angry about it. Another gunshot. Tommy lowers his head towards the paper, his nose almost touching it. “It’s great.” He says, a little quieter, a little mumbled.

“Is it?” Phil asks, and he means to follow it up with a question as to what could possibly be wrong, only for Tommy to then give a great big yawn, so much exhaustion within it that he’s blinking slight tears from his eyes once he’s done, hand holding his crayon coming up to rub at his face.

“It’s the best thing ever.” Tommy says, pushing himself with great effort to sit back up, his head looking a little heavy. He picks up the drawing to wave it a little in the air, Phil still unable to see it in full with how he keeps moving it. “You’re gonna cry when you see it. That’s how good it is.”

“I can already feel the tears approaching, in being so close to such a piece of art.”

“Yup.” Tommy nods, leaning back and putting his legs forward to cross them together. He puts the paper down on his lap, as if ready to continue with his masterpiece, then he just stares at it, and blinks with a somewhat dazed sort of look, the gunshot outside making him blink.

“Oh-kay.” Phil huffs, finally catching the signals and admitting the truth. It's gone late. Tommy's trying his best here, but he's going to end up faceplanting and passing out into his paper soon enough, and Phil would rather not hear the future complaints of his hard work being damaged. “Time for sleep, I think.” He tells Tommy, and the kid's head snaps up like Phil's suggested they go outside and start fist fighting zombies with their bare hands.

“No. I'm working on this.”

“You can finish it tomorrow.” Phil bargains, moving from his spot, climbing forward to gather the loose crayons up.

“No! You're moving! Hey!” Tommy protests, holding out his hand as Phil picks up the crayons into his palm, putting them aside on the nightstand. “How am I gonna draw you now?! You moved!”

“Surely you were nearly done?” Phil questions, Tommy throwing his arms up with a harsh scoff.

“No! I wasn't!”

Phil raises a brow, a bit skeptical. He *had* been sitting there for quite a while. Tommy slides the paper away somewhere behind his back, as if knowing his words aren't quite so true.

“It's- It needed finishing.” Tommy defends, and Phil makes an unconvinced ‘uh-huh’ in reply. “I was adding cool stuff!”

“You can add cool stuff in the morning.” Phil promises, taking some of the stray papers of Tommy’s other drawings and putting those on top of the nightstand as well. Tommy turns his back to Phil with the drawing held close to his chest, as if to keep away Phil’s eyes. Phil pays no mind to his stubborn efforts. He just picks up Tommy by the armpits and drags him near. Tommy makes a valid effort of pretending to struggle. Two kicks, a whiny noise. Then he settles and lays against Phil’s chest without complaint, no more fight to give. He still grips the drawing to his chest, though.

“I’m not even tired.” Tommy argues, putting his head against Phil’s shirt, curling his legs up in a way that looks an awful lot like someone getting comfortable so that they can take a nap. “I’m the most awake man ever.”

Phil hums against the sound of a gunshot outside, wondering off-handedly how long those two will be up there. “Well, awake man. Do you think you could show me what you’ve made, since you’re so wide awake and ready to talk?”

“No.”

“Oh, come on.” Phil squeezes Tommy tight, his chin resting over his bright blond curls. “I sat there for a good while, I wanna see!”

“I told you, it’s too good. You’ll cry.”

“I’m fine with crying.”

“No, you’ll get *tears* all over it.” Tommy scowls, saying the word with a hint of disgust, hating the idea of soggy paper. “And snot. It’ll get all snotty, and then it’ll be gross, and then we’ll have to burn it, and you’ll cry even more, because it was so beautiful and we had to burn it. Because of your *snot* .”

Phil snorts from the sheer bizarreness of such a series of events. “I promise to not cry or snot all over your drawing.” Phil swears, leaning a little farther down, pressing his cheek to Tommy’s temple. “Look, I’ll let you stay holding it. Just show me what you’ve made.”

“It’s not *done* .”

“But I wanna see...” Phil still insists, fingers creeping towards the end of the paper. Tommy kicks his legs out and jerks his arm out, holding the paper away.

“It’s not done!” Tommy yells, and Phil makes his half-hearted attempt at reaching for the paper anyway, his other hand coming to tickle Tommy under the arm so that he’ll be forced to let go. “No!” Tommy giggles in trying to lean away, to keep the drawing out of reach. “You’re gonna get snot on me!”

“It is the price to pay for being so good at art.”

Tommy makes some shrieky, high-pitched sound that could probably be an insult, but it’s lost in translation as Phil tugs the paper out from his hand, relenting on the tickling at last so that Tommy will stop squirming and let him get a proper view at the drawing.

“Oh,” Phil grins, unable to help it, a small chuckle coming from his throat. “It’s wonderful.”

“Hold your snot.” Tommy demands, slapping a hand up at Phil’s nose. Phil laughs and leans away, and then takes another moment to look at the drawing made. It’s honestly adorable. It’s very clearly him, or some attempt of a depiction of him. His hair looks a little spikey for his taste, but who is he to judge the art style of a greater mind?

“I can feel the tears coming.” Phil says, gently putting the paper down on the bed, his arms wrapping close around Tommy to pull him in. “I’ll aim them right for your head.”

“Gross!” Tommy yells. And then he punches Phil in the gut, Phil choking a little. He releases the child at last, and Tommy scrambles away, grabbing the drawing and jumping off the bed, only so that he can put it with his crayons and other papers, it seems. He returns to grab Henry, that dear plush cow, and he hugs it to his chest as Phil scoots to the edge of the mattress, legs hanging down.

“I’ll have Techno hang it up somewhere, so we can see it all the time.” Phil says, and as if on cue, another gunshot rings out, either Techno or Wil making their aim from the roof. Tommy hears the sound too, and all the energy from their little moment bleeds away, his eyes blinking slowly as he presses the lower half of his face into the top of Henry’s head.

“I don’t wanna go to sleep.” He says, words muffled into the plush. Phil slumps a little in pity for the kid, and he raises an arm out, Tommy coming near and tucking himself into Phil’s side as if it’s a habit they’ve had all their lives.

“You can stay up a bit more, if you really want. I could try reading one of Techno’s books to you.”

Tommy doesn’t give any response to the suggestion. He just curls up tighter against Phil, brows furrowing together as Henry is lowered down into his lap.

“I don’t wanna go to sleep without them.” He confesses, and the sound of the gunshot is like an obvious reminder: Tommy doesn’t like to sleep alone. Or rather, he doesn’t like to sleep when they aren’t all there with him.

Phil glances over his shoulder to look towards the window, the night sky still sitting as dark as ever out there. It has been a bit of time since they’ve been up there. The gunshots have been steadily getting slower, with longer intervals in between, so Phil feels like they must be running out of ammo, but he’s also got a hunch they’ll keep going until that very last bullet flies. And who knows how much longer that’ll take. Tommy’s already on the edge of sleep as is.

“Alright.” Phil says softly, and he reaches over the bed to drag a blanket over. “C’mon. Let’s go get your brothers.” He decides, taking Tommy into his arms, wrapping the blanket over him so as to keep the night chill off.

Tommy makes no protest in being carried up, putting his arms around Phil’s neck, resting his cheek onto the edge of his shoulder. Henry hangs by the arm in his hand, and they go on out the permanently-open door, Floof raising his head in curiosity as to where they’re going.

“Hold down the fort, Floof.” Tommy hears Phil say, hearing the clink of Phil picking up the light, watching the way it shines dimly around the hallway as they go through the apartment. Phil goes out the front door and heads to the stairs, and Tommy puts his head further down and closes his eyes, letting sleep drift just a little closer.

The sound of gunshots are still muffled through the stairway, but they echo out enough for Tommy’s ears to catch, past the sound of Phil’s feet moving over the steps, the shuffle of his clothes. Tommy huffs against Phil in the long few minutes it takes to get to the top, and once Phil opens the door to outside, the cold chill flowing through, Tommy’s skin prickling up, there comes another gunshot, so much louder than all the others. Tommy can’t help but flinch, not expecting the sound to be so vivid. He blinks his eyes open, and feels Phil wrap the blanket closer over him as they head out onto the roof, Wil and Techno’s voices coming into range.

“-told you to not aim for that one, it’s literally not gonna happen-” Techno is saying, sounding somewhat resigned.

“I’m getting it, I swear- It’s *right* there-” Wilbur hisses in reply, frustration on the edge of his voice.

“The angle won’t allow it-”

“It’s not the angle, it’s that stupid pole-!”

“Are you both nearly done?” Phil interrupts, both Techno and Wil turning their heads, Wil lowering the rifle in his hand, straightening up in surprise.

“Phil.” Wil says, turning fully with Techno, looking with confusion to the lump underneath the blanket in Phil’s arms, then looking terribly emotional when spotting Tommy’s head poking out above, his socked feet hanging out at Phil’s sides. He comes close to try and pull the blanket over them, to keep the cold off his little brother’s legs. “Ohh. Are we taking too long? Has he fallen asleep?”

“Practically. He’s not gonna stay in bed if you stay up here, though.” Phil nods, readjusting his hold on Tommy, moving him so that he can be handed over towards Wil. “Trade?” He

asks, and Wil gives over the rifle without a hint of complaint, carefully maneuvering Tommy into his hold, Tommy clinging on with a stubborn yawn coming out.

“Hello, sunshine.” Wil greets, voice soft. “Hi. Goodness, you’re passing out on me.” He grins, trying to fix the blanket on Tommy’s shoulders, the fabric falling off. Phil helps out as Tommy makes a grumbling noise against Wil’s collarbone, expression souring up with the combination of the cold and the drowsiness getting to him.

“Dad got snot all over me. Because he’s a crybaby.” Tommy says, Techno making an incredulous face at that statement. He looks at Phil with a very questioning look. Phil makes an airy laugh, hand coming to his face for a second, as if needing to hold back a smile.

“What?” Wil sputters, almost laughing, glancing towards Techno as if checking that he’s also heard the same nonsense. “He *what* ?”

Phil huffs, shaking his head. “I did nothing.”

“Apparently you did, according to his word.”

“He’s half-asleep, don’t trust his word.” Phil waves a hand, Tommy already dozing off on Wil’s shoulder, content with everyone’s company at last, no need for a proper bed at all. “I’m surprised you’re both lasting this long with the bullets. Are you using them all up?” He moves on, checking the gun in hand to see if it’s loaded, then moving over to Techno’s side to make his own attempt at aiming.

“Techno insists he has plenty to spare.” Wilbur replies, Techno leaning his elbows on the ledge and watching with focus as Phil tries to pick a target amongst the sea of bodies on the road. “Try to aim for the guy at the front.”

“It’s not happening.” Techno deadpans, looking at Wilbur like he’s being hopeless.

“He’s literally right there!” Wil insists, stepping closer, a hand resting over Tommy’s back as a gust of wind kicks up. Techno reaches out and adjusts the blanket over the kid for a second before turning back to Phil.

“What guy? What am I aiming at?” Phil questions, and Techno points it out, a zombie lingering by the front of the very building they’re standing on. It’s nearly a straight shot down, but it’s standing, stumbling, doing a weird shuffle-- around a light pole, which blocks the path pretty neatly. Occasionally, it leans out, offering a decent try at its skull. But overall, it’s in a poor spot to shoot at. “Why *that* one?” Phil asks, slight judgement for the choice.

“It’s closer. It’s easier to shoot at.” Wilbur reasons.

“It’s a bad angle.” Techno replies, sounding skeptical that it could ever be a good one.

“Your *face* is a bad angle.” Wil insults. Phil snorts, then lifts the rifle up.

“Okay, hold on, let me try.” He says, and aiming down. He waits and watches the zombie shuffle in place, almost moving, and yet not quite. He shifts to the left as the zombie makes a slow, dragging step forward, and then turns his head a little, like needing to see it better-

Tommy jolts a little more awake against the sound of the gun firing, and then feels very at ease to the sound of Phil’s laugh, Techno making a sputtering noise, almost upset sounding.

“No fucking way.” Wilbur swears, stepping closer, looking over the ledge. A body sits laid out sidewalk. It’s a gross sight, and he takes his step back, giving an incredulous look towards Phil. “What the fuck!”

“I mean, it *is* closer-” Phil tries to agree, trying to explain his aim away.

“I wasted six bullets on that one, Phil!” Wil cuts him off, uncaring of his excuses.

“Yeah, you can fucking see it on the light pole.” Phil hums, noting the bullet holes that are plain to see.

“It kept moving behind it!” Wilbur defends, and he falters against Tommy pushing against him to lift his head up, his bleary eyes squinted up in a very upset frown. The kid leans his heavy head down, looking around on the floor as if in search of something. When he doesn’t see it, his expression goes even more upset, nearly sad. “What, Tommy?” Wilbur asks, and Techno points it out before Tommy can open his mouth.

“Ah. Henry fell.” Techno spots the stuffed cow lying pitifully behind Wil’s feet, probably slipped out of Tommy’s hand while he was falling asleep. He moves away from the ledge to reach down and grab it, brushing off whatever bit of dirt that might’ve stuck to its fake fur.

“How many bullets do you guys have left?” Phil asks as Techno hands Henry over to Tommy’s outstretched hand, tugging at the blanket again to cover his feet poking out, his visible socks a clear reminder that he should be in bed, rather than out here.

“Uhhh, just a couple-” Techno goes to answer, and Tommy kicks his leg up, the blanket falling away as he cuts in.

“I wanna go to *bed* .” Tommy speaks up, practically spitting the words out, flopping his head down onto Wil’s shoulder with a big, harsh huff, his arms curled tight around Henry so he won’t get dropped a second time. “Stop shooting things, I wanna go to *sleep* !”

Techno snorts, leaning a little closer to Wil’s shoulder.. “You can go to sleep. We’ll be down in a bit.”

“ *You* sleep!” Tommy shoots back, a brilliant counterpoint. Techno raises his palms up in surrender. Drat. He’s been outmaneuvered. No arguing that one. No way out.

“It is late...” Techno trails off, lowering his hands so as to cross his arms over his chest, hands wrapping over his arms for a second to keep the cold away. “No sense in dragging the night out, I guess.”

“Yeah, might as well.” Phil agrees, slinging the rifle over his shoulder, hardly disappointed at losing his chance to try popping off a few zombie heads. “You guys can come and look at Tommy’s masterpiece, too.”

“Masterpiece?” Wil repeats, sounding ever intrigued.

“He made a portrait of me. It’s very nice.” Phil nods.

“Very nice.” Techno repeats, almost stressing the words, as if they’re an exaggeration, or a flat out lie.

“You’ll cry tears over it.” Phil promises, turning his back to them all, heading to the stairway with little more to add. Techno swipes up the box of bullets for later use- even if there is little left in them- and follows at Wilbur’s side as they all head into the stairway. The echo of their shuffling footsteps all overlap as they head down to their hallway, and Tommy’s grumbling words are muffled into Wil’s shirt as they reach the door.

“What was that?” Techno asks, opening the door, pausing for a second as Tommy turns his head, words mumbled out again.

“I don’t want you to go.”

They all falter for a moment, within the hallway.

A sudden snuffle sounds out.

Panic ensues, within the hallway.

“Hey, hey-”

“No one’s going! We’re all right here!”

“Tommy-”

“I want you to stay *home* .” Tommy lifts his head, tears evident, pooling within his eyes. “I can’t- I’m not gonna get to sleep if you guys don’t come home.” He will not get this again, if they go out there. Hoards kill. Hoards are something to stay away from. Phil and Techno plan on going in anyway. Tommy can’t do anything but hope and fear the worst. “If you go-”

“We’ll come back.” Phil promises, and Tommy shakes his head.

“But you’re going soon! You’re gonna *go* !”

“But we’ll be back.” Technoblade swears, with such soothing, casual surety that it has Tommy’s easing up. “We’ll be right back. We’ll be gone for only a little, and then we’ll be right back. The zombies can’t get us, remember that. We kill them easily.”

“They can get you.” Tommy points out. Phil is immune. Techno isn’t.

Technoblade’s eyes flick away for a second. Both Phil and Wilbur stand quiet as Tommy wipes an arm over his nose.

“I will come home.” Techno says. “I’ll-”

Tommy snuffles again, then reaches out, a blanket falling away from his shoulder as his arm lifts up towards Techno. Wilbur leans close and holds onto the blanket, keeping it from hitting the ground as Techno takes Tommy in his arms. Tommy leans his head onto his shoulder just as he did for Wil, and he holds his arms tight around his neck, just as he did with Phil.

Technoblade breathes in deep with the weight of his heart within his arms.

He turns and goes into the apartment, taking Tommy home.

His family follows.

Chapter End Notes

yknow the supply run was supposed to be a short scene. like a throwaway detail, even. but i keep accidentally making build up towards it. like somethings gonna go terribly wrong. at this point something SHOULD go terribly wrong. but i have no idea what because theyre all so cute as a family. who could ever swing an angst bat at them? i could. swinging as we speak.

KIDDING. I'm KIDDING. sigh. plot is running away from me tho. more shenanigans on the way.

**Sometimes you really just gotta put the blorbos in a blender ok
you just gotta shove them in the blender and just
BRRRRRRRRRR**

Chapter Notes

My bad for the slight poetic bits here and there I sometimes go a little too hard on random wordings and suddenly the silly fic is getting Fancy with WORDS ahhh whatever thats not my problem anymore im putting these words in your lap and climbing out your window

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The morning of the supply run goes like this:

Techno wakes up to a weight on his chest, both metaphorically and literally, there is an entire child laying over him, using him as the mattress. Tommy's curls tickle under his chin and his little foot is kicking into Techno's side. The blanket is nowhere to be seen and Technoblade is half-sure the kid is drooling on him.

It is vaguely similar to the first weeks in when Tommy was settling in, clinging to Techno in a way that was almost desperate for the relief of comforting company.

This time around, though, there's no quiet annoyance at the sound in his ears, Tommy's gentle snore rising and falling. There isn't a passing thought of thinking, 'well, at least this is just temporary. The kid's brother will take him off my hands soon.' There's no urge to push the kid off, to escape out of the room and try to return to the silence of before, of when the only other company he had was a fluffy dog.

Techno breathes deep, and holds his breath, and wants to stay here forever. Wants to be here forever, resting underneath the whole blessed burden of his heart.

But logic does prevail, and he knows that if he wants to keep this sort of morning, keep this type of peace, then he has to protect it. He has to ensure their survival.

He has to get up.

The morning of the supply run happens like this: It is a perfect start, with Techno grabbing Tommy up in his arms and practically squeezing him into being awake, Tommy immediately crying complaints, and then sputtering an argument when Techno says its payback for using him as a pillow.

Phil and Wilbur aren't in the bed as the two of them have their bickering, but the two of them dragged into it the moment Techno steps out into the living room, Tommy yanking with both his hands at the back of his shirt, in some effort to get him to admit that he has done no wrong and can never do a wrong and Techno is just. The wrong.

"The wrongest, if you will." Wilbur adds in, grinning a little from where he sits curled up in the corner of the couch, guitar held close over his knees. "The wrongest wrong."

"The wrongest wrong!" Tommy repeats, screaming it out like a terrible title bestowed on Techno's dreary head. Phil bursts out laughing from where he's sitting below Wil, on the ground beside the couch. Floof lifts his head as if curious at the commotion.

The morning of the supply run goes like this-- Techno witnesses three different smiles, the evil, the stubborn, and the amused, and he gives his own in reply, something satisfied and content. It falters on his face when he searches their pantry for breakfast, and the weight on his chest sinks deep when he sees the meager number of cans sitting in dust.

The supply run was meant to be a week earlier, honestly, but they keep pushing back, keep stalling for time. Tommy insists they can make do, grabbing at the cans, standing at the tip of his toes to reach the ones on the higher shelves. Techno lets him help, and says nothing for the fact that they cannot put off the supply run for yet another morning.

They make an odd sort of breakfast together, as they have for the whole week, the best of their supply today being beans and vegetables and vegetable juice, which Tommy looks upon

as if it's the worst thing to ever cross his path. He frowns so hard, looks so utterly dismayed, Techno has to console him with a pat on the head, ever pitying. Wilbur tries to mash Tommy's share of beans into something a bit more appetizing, and it's a mild success. Tommy is more interested in pushing his spoon into it rather than eating it, but he's stopped looking as if he's on the brink of devastation. Over the dinner table, they share the last of some crackers, too, which sit only a touch stale in Techno's mouth, and seem overly salty according to Phil. When done, they leave their dirty plates on the table once done, some leftovers kept behind, not given a second glance.

The morning sun rises into an afternoon light, and with that signal, Phil and Techno gather their supplies, pulling on layers of cloth around their arms and legs to fend off the threat of biting teeth. It's not the most invulnerable method of heading out into a hoard, but it's leagues better than what Phil was doing in the hoards before, and Techno makes a point to remind him of that. Phil sighs and rolls his eyes so hard, it's a wonder they don't get stuck.

Tommy lingers close as they tie up their shoes, roll down their sleeves, braid up their hair while looking over Techno's layout of his storage once again, going over their plan. The kid leans against the doorway of their bedroom, and Wilbur stands behind him, a hand kept to the back of his shoulder. Techno looks at both of them, and they give matching faces of false bravery, their smiles off balance, their eyes kept full of worry.

They look so much alike. There is no doubt they're brothers, indeed. They're his brothers, and Techno gives a mirroring smile back, something easy and light, as if going into the threat of death is a side hobby for him. In a way, it is. It used to be. He might be a little out of practice now, but- it will be fine.

He insists it will all go fine. He settles Tommy's worries with reassurance after reassurance, reminding him of the zombie wall, and the taking of the city, and the safety they had before the hoard got in. *Remember how empty the streets were?* He asks Tommy. *Remember how you could run all through it, and there wasn't a zombie to be found? That was because of me. I killed all the zombies then, and I can do it again.*

He can do this a second time. The first instance was a blur, mostly a lot of time spent relieving stress through the form of splattering blood to all his roads, but he still managed it. He got the end result. He built that wall of bodies, and today is the start of making it ever higher.

Although, he will say- looking upon the horde this time around feels a little different.

They go down to the first floor of the building, to give their goodbyes and to set out into the street, and from here, in the odd little lobby area in where they stand, there's a clear view into the crowd outside. There's rotting faces and bloodied, clawing hands scraping past the glass doors, not quite trying to get inside, but still a little too close for comfort. They look like an endless sea of dead, constantly shuffling and moving and making grumbling zombie noises.

Technoblade stares at it for a little longer than needed as they hover by the door for the stairwell, and he feels Tommy's hands wrap around the back of his leg, fingers digging in. He looks down, and sees Tommy staring at the horde too, lips pressed into a thin frown. In any other instance, he would swear up and down that zombies do not scare him. Here, now, Techno sees so plainly the honest truth.

He doesn't care for it.

He reaches his hand down and lets Tommy hold on tight.

"I feel like there's got to be a better way to do this." Wilbur murmurs, looking uneasy at the sight of the dead wandering outside. He reaches out towards Techno and holds an arm over Tommy's shoulders. "You're honestly going to just- walk into that. Like nothing?"

"I mean, it's more a run than a walk." Phil shrugs, so terribly casual over the faint chorus of undead groaning. "But more or less, yeah."

"Is it too late to reconsider?" Wilbur asks, a wavering edge in it, and Techno turns his head in surprise. "Can't we reconsider? Maybe if we figured out another way-"

"There's no connecting buildings to the storagehouse. It has a singular entrance, and that's by the front, on the ground." Technoblade points out. Tommy turns to let Wilbur hold him a little tighter, and Techno doesn't pull away from the small hand pulling hard at his fingers. "I mean, I guess we could try jumping from this building to the storagehouse, but- ehh. Broken legs aren't going to do us much good when we miss that landing. This isn't the worst case scenario, really. Me and Phil have dealt with hoards head-on before. He's immune. I literally have a zombie wall."

“Still.” Wilbur deadpans, not very convinced. “It’s- that’s-”

“It’s not anything different.” Techno insists, speaking breezily. “You’ve seen the hoard before. We literally shot at them for funsies.”

“It’s different seeing them up close! It’s- that’s a fuckton!” Wil says, throwing a finger out in the general direction of the doors. “It’s a fuckton of corpses that will be surrounding you! And yeah, you can probably deal with it, but- Does not that freak you out?!”

Techno looks away as if considering, staring at the doors. He makes a slight shrug. “Again, he’s immune.” He says, waving towards Phil. He waves at himself. “And I’ve made a zombie wall.”

“I don’t want another zombie wall.” Tommy says, eyebrows scrunched together as if caught in a sudden bout of anger. “It’s gross and it’s scary and it’s- it’s stupid.” He spits out. He then looks towards Phil, his upset look shifting into something more pleading. “Dad, can’t we wait until tomorrow? You can do it tomorrow, right?”

“Tommy.” Phil speaks sympathetically, and from that tone alone, Tommy knows there’s no going back up the stairs together, even with the Dad card. His face screws up into a threat of tears, then he frantically blinks it away, and turns to shove his face into Wil’s shirt. Wil rests a palm over the top of his head and another over the back of his shoulder.

“Tommy.” Techno repeats, in the same soft voice, and Tommy breaks away from Wilbur to slam into Techno instead. Techno’s half expecting it. He doesn’t budge, even with the surprise tackle. He leans down to hold Tommy in return. “It’s fine. It’s gonna be fine. You’ll go up and keep Floof company, keep Wilbur company, and we’ll be back before the sun even sets.”

“You’ll be-” Tommy pauses, and then starts again. “You’ll be back so I can sleep.” It’s not a question.

“Yeah.”

“You’ll be back.” Tommy repeats, a little muffled as he shoves his face against Techno.
“You’ll come back.”

(How many times has he repeated to himself before, Techno wonders. With Wil having been gone for so long, how many times did he insist against his worst fears-- *He’ll be back. He has to come back.*)

“It’ll be easy.” Technoblade replies, turning Tommy’s head up so he can see the quiet grin on his face. “Like a walk in the park. Honestly, the worst part is just going to be the smell after. Me and Phil are gonna smell like zombie guts for a whole week.”

Tommy sniffles, and then scrunches his nose with a slight frown. “Ew.”

“Phil already smells like zombie guts.” Wilbur says abruptly, and Phil takes a second to process the tease before slapping a hand at his arm, Wil dodging away with a cut-off laugh. “We’ll hose you both down when you get back.” He threatens his way.

“With what hose?” Phil questions, and Wilbur waves the question off, uncaring of that detail.

“We’ll hose you off, burn the worst of your outfit, and then set you to dry on the roof.”

“Like what, a set of towels on a clothesline?” Phil asks incredulously, and Tommy snickers at the two of them.

He steps away from Techno and Wil to give his needed hug towards Phil, and Phil leans down to hold him back with all the love he can muster. Techno smiles at the sight, then looks to the doors again, at the dead hands reaching out. He adjusts his sleeves over his arms, and then turns to look towards Wilbur, only to be caught off guard with arms suddenly thrown over his shoulders.

“Oh- okay, we’re all doing hugs now, alright-” Techno blurts out, fumbling to try and give some effort of reciprocation, and Wilbur laughs over his shoulder.

“Don’t be stupid.” He says, a near whisper and a near threat. “Don’t get hurt.”

“Don’t make it sound like I’m not coming back.” Technoblade shoots back, hands hovering awkwardly over Wil’s back. “This isn’t a suicide mission.” Wilbur pulls back with his hands still on Techno’s shoulders.

“You’re still walking head-first into a zombie horde. At least Phil is fine even if he does get bit- you’re the one we have to worry about.”

Techno tilts his head. “I feel the need to remind once again of the creation of this certain zombie wall-”

“Uh-huh.” Wil nods, letting go. “Shut up about the zombie wall.”

Techno huffs. No one respects his efforts here. What insult. If only he wasn’t so fond. Maybe then he could actually feel offended.

Wilbur gives a matching hug to Phil with his own well wishes. He drags on the conversation even with the final goodbyes, Tommy clinging to his side with a frustrated expression over his face, like he’s trying hard to replace the need to cry with the urge to scream swears. Eventually, they do turn to go.

“At the first gunshot. Then you can both go out.” Wilbur says, knowing his rifle sits up on the roof now, waiting to be picked up, waiting to be aimed. “You wait until then.”

“We’ll wait till your signal, Wil.” Phil agrees, and Wilbur gives a hard nod. He takes Tommy’s hand in his, makes one passing glance to the doors, then to Techno, and then turns

and goes, heading into the stairwell to climb towards the roof.

Phil watches the door drift closed. Techno turns his attention back to the zombies at the glass, and he stares as he did before, looking upon the dying faces with a hand resting over the sword on his hip. It is different this time. Even though this is practically a repeat of the previous, of Techno looking to the sea of the dead with a determination to get through-- this is different.

This seems- harder? Or a little more daunting, at least.

He feels like Wilbur's nerves have rubbed off on him. There's a crushing feeling in the space of his ribs, and it'll burst his heart if he dares to let it. Before, he didn't care so much about the danger of all this. Zombies were an annoyance, and he dealt with it accordingly, and he didn't care for what could happen, because at the end of the day, he couldn't die.

He still cannot. But it's for a different reason, now.

Techno takes a breath, and keeps his eyes on the doors. "This was easier before."

"Hm?" Phil turns his head towards him, eyes bright.

"Facing it was easier last time." Techno mutters, and there's a genuine type of stress creeping into his words. He breathes, moving his hand away from his sword so that he can adjust his sleeves again, tuck his hair behind his ear. "It was *so* much easier last time."

"It's..." Phil trails off, and then steps closer to Techno's side. "I guess it's a bit more crowded now." He reasons, staring out at the zombies looking to nothing. "They're all bunched together, you're a bit out of practice, in terms of this sort of survival-"

"More than that." Techno breathes out. He breathes, and breathes, and shakes his hands out a little, like he can get rid of the sick feeling trying to stick to his skin. "It's more than just

that.” He breathes, and it’s not quite enough to fill all this empty space in his lungs. “I have something to lose now.”

The weight of Phil’s gaze burns into the side of his skull as Techno glances over his shoulder, to the doors leading to the stairway. Ever so faintly, Tommy’s voice can be heard, echoing down.

“Last time, I didn’t have anything to lose.” Techno admits. “Because you were dead. You were dead, and nothing was important, everything was on fire, and I just thought- that if I had to be the one to survive, then I had to do something about it, or- get some sort of revenge, I guess? Wipe out the whole- zombie bloodline or something in your name, or in your memory, or-”

Phil’s hand wraps around his arm, making him stop.

Techno breathes.

“I don’t-” He tries to speak. “This time-”

“This time, I’m here.” Phil says, and Techno looks at him. “And it’s gonna be fine.”

“....I know.”

“It’ll be easy.” Phil repeats Techno’s own words back to him. Techno finds it a little funny in how it’s still effective. He nods.

“I know.”

“Do you?”

Techno shrugs, looking away. “If you say it’ll be fine, then who am I to disagree?”

Phil smiles, something with too much in his eyes. He opens his mouth to reply, to carry on.

A gunshot rings out.

Techno takes Phil by the hand and goes for the front doors, pulling them forward in a brisk walk, Phil grasping onto Techno’s fingers with a hold so tight that it honestly might break something.

“You lead the way.” Phil reminds.

“Don’t let go of me.”

Phil nods.

And from there, Techno slams his shoulder into the door and forces it open, pushing the zombies on the other side, shoving them out of the way as he and Phil slip out in the road.

Their advantage above all is the fact zombies are slow to realize that two humans have just moved past, and Techno takes full advantage of the way it takes a few seconds for them to draw in and begin attacking. He breaks out into a run as best he can, pushing zombies aside, pulling Phil with him as fast as he can go. Clawing hands start to reach out, and he dodges where he can, twists away before they can get a proper grip. Dead fingers aren’t the best at holding tight, and Techno knows it, he knows it, he knows they’re not a true threat, but one curls its hand around his arm and tugs, and his breath falters as he turns his head-

And Phil’s axe slams down and cuts the arm away just as a bullet from the roof comes zipping down, landing straight through the head of the zombie. It falls to the ground with its severed limb, and Techno stays running, pulling Phil along.

More hands reach out to grab at them, the crowd pushes to try and come close, and Techno keeps moving past it all, not letting them falter his pace. For any that manage to get a proper grab, Phil is already swinging at them, or Wilbur is already shooting them down. Techno manages to make the short distance to the storagehouse, and from there, Phil takes on the offensive.

“Right behind you!” Phil assures as his hand leaves Techno’s, so that Techno can focus on getting the door clear, a handful of zombies stumbling around in the doorway, closing in around the open entrance. Techno draws his sword and cuts through the bodies with slight annoyance at the fact that he’s really going to have to drag out so many bodies from his buildings after this is all said and done. Gunshots from Wilbur’s aim ring out behind his head as Phil fends off the hoard from his back, and as the last zombie goes down, Techno yanks Phil inside and shoves his shoulder to the door, hands trying to get in the way to stop it from closing.

“Back up, back up-” Phil says, lifting his axe high and hacking at the wiggling hands, forcing them away from the opening of the door. Techno hits the lock the second the door finally shuts properly, and then he leans heavy against the banging metal, taking a heaving breath.

“Okay.” Techno says, fumbling to put his sword back at his side, pushing himself to move on and look to the mess of his supplies. “Easy part done.”

“I’d argue this is the easier part. Now we’re just looking for shit.” Phil says, not putting his axe away onto his back, moving along to grab a supply bag from where Techno said he stores them. He throws one over to Techno, and then heads over to the cans. “Classic looting and scavenging. Ah, never gets old.”

“It’s getting old. I’m over it.” Techno immediately says, moving around his shelves to directly search for a specific box that’s somewhere around the flour...

“You know, it never hurts to keep good habits in knowing where to find good shit.” Phil points, throwing in cans and sweeping up bottles. “What if you need to venture out of the city? Need to feed yourself out on the road?”

“Then you can loot and scavenge for us. I’ll cook whatever you find.” Techno replies. “But also, unlikely that I’m ever leaving, Tommy has said he doesn’t like moving around so much-

are you *KIDDING* ME-”

Phil’s head snaps up at the sound of things clattering and falling, a creak of metal before something big slamming to the ground. “Techno?!” He screams, making his way over, hearing another screech of metal moving across concrete.

“Check for zombies in the back corners!” Techno yells out, Phil having to search around to actually find him around the shelves. “There’s a- well, there was one here.” Techno says, and Phil finally finds him, kneeling on the ground, pulling his sword out from a dead body, with items scattered all around him, a shelf laying down at his feet. A muddled movement comes from the shadows farther ahead, and Phil goes straight past Techno to take care of it, Techno letting him go on and focusing his attention to standing on both feet and dragging the supply bag to sit carefully over his shoulder.

Phil makes a sharp little whistle as soon as the zombie drops, axe having torn through its skull, and he points it out to the rest of the storagehouse, waiting for some groaning response. Faintly, something makes a muttering noise, and Phil follows it like a bloodhound to the hunt. Techno busies himself in throwing together their last supply bag, grunting in pulling it up despite it not being all that terribly heavy.

“Phil!” Techno calls. “C’mon, I’ve got most of what we needed.”

“My bag’s by the cans, hold on.” Phil says, circling back around, deeming the place zombie free after his little stroll around. “Let me hold the second one.” He insists, at seeing Techno holding two, and Techno gives it up without argument, not wanting to be stuck in here for a second longer than needed. Phil slings it over him without any falter, and follows Techno in making a beeline to the door, the groaning chorus of zombies still calling loud.

Techno holds his hand to the lock for a moment. He breathes.

He opens the door, and as the zombies try to force their way forward, he pushes on, cutting his sword through them and yanking Phil’s hand behind him. The crowd is thick around the storagehouse, likely because of all the noise, but there’s a fair bit of bodies on the ground, too, courtesy of Wilbur trying to lessen the numbers however he can.

The bodies help in not letting the zombie crowd too close. They also make it a bit harder to run, and Techno almost stumbles for a second over some zombie's leg, his breath hitching as he tilts hard and his boot skids across the road. Phil pulls at him to keep him on his feet, and then pulls him along in taking the lead, shoving forward and hacking a path for them to get back to their building. Wilbur's fire speeds up as he focuses on just slowing the worst of the horde around them, and Phil's swings get more frantic as he tries to keep the most persistent of the zombies back. For one moment, it's all manageable, it's as easy as they kept insisting it would be, and then-

Techno's hand slips out from Phil's.

"Techno-" Phil turns, and sees him fall, sees him slam to the ground, almost immediately covered by the all rotting bodies leaning in to try and get their scrap. Wil can't shoot them all down, with the risk of hitting Techno past them. Phil feels hands trying to pull him back, trying to take him down. "TECHNO!" Phil screams, and he lunges forward to get them off, and watches with hysteric relief as a sword stabs up and through a zombie's shoulder, a hand pushing up to keep a zombie back by the chest.

"Phil!" Techno calls, and it is something desperate. Phil reaches out like all the zombies around him, but unlike them, he isn't reaching for his friend's death. "Phil!" Techno screams, and Phil's fingers dig into the back of Techno's shirt, hauling him up and pushing him away.

"FUCKING GET UP!" He feels hands scratching at his sleeves, pulling at his shirt. "GET UP AND *MOVE*, TECHNO!" He drives his axe into a neck, blood splattering to the ground, then cuts at an arm, and cuts at a hand, and cuts at everything that threatens Techno's back, at everything that is trying to take him away.

Techno pulls at Phil by the strap of the supply bags, and Phil goes, hearing Wilbur shoot them a path, hearing bodies hit the ground. Techno pulls him along and stumbles to the door and they both shove it open and shove it closed behind them and-

They fall, and hit the ground.

"Fuck!" Phil spits out, his axe clattering down next to him, soaked in blood, his knees aching in landing on the floor so roughly. He can't bring himself to care. "Fuck, that wasn't- Why was that so much worse? That was so much worse than last time! Oh my fucking god!"

Techno makes a strangled noise that's a vague agreement, pushing the supply bag off from him and curling up on his side in a way that has Phil caught with worry.

"Techno." Phil says, and then he sees the way he curls in tighter on himself, his breath audibly hitching. "Techno? Techno-" He crawls over. "Hey, hey- what-?"

He grabs at his friend and forces Techno to turn over on his back, and sees a blooming red color over the front of his shoulder, the fabric growing wet with blood.

"Oh-" Phil breathes. Or he stops breathing. His heart, as unbeating as it may be, does something funny, suddenly held too tight in terror. His hands immediately start pulling at the collar of Techno's shirt. "You've- you've got to let me see, Techno-"

"It's fine, it's fine-" Techno chokes out, grunting in feeling the cloth being peeled away. Phil wipes off blood with his bare hand, trying to see the mark of it.

It's not a bite. It's an open gash, it's bleeding bad, but-

"The fucking-" Phil breaks out in a laugh, a little hysterical, pieces clicking together near instantly. "The shelf fell on you. It fell on you. From the zombie, earlier-"

Techno nods, hand pressing over Phil's, looking slightly sheepish over the expression of pain across his face.

"You're okay."

Phil takes Techno by the face with his other free hand, and he cares little about the blood that's left at Techno's cheek with it. He presses his forehead to his, and takes a moment to revel in the fact that they've gotten here, on the floor of this building that they call home.

“You’re okay. We did it, and we’re okay.”

Techno chuckles out something of utter relief.

“Let’s just-” He breathes out, head falling back to the floor. It has to hurt a little, with how it gives a thump on the landing, but he doesn’t seem care. “Let’s just- Just- give me a second.” He breathes, and breathes, and can’t seem to catch the air. He stays laid out, suddenly so terribly exhausted in his relief. They did it. They got supplies to last them. He got what he wanted to grab. Mission accomplished. Yayyy.

“Oh, shit. Hey. Hey.” Phil presses a little more persistently on the wound over Techno’s shoulder. “Are you gonna pass the fuck out?”

“Just a second.” Techno huffs, and then he makes no move to get up, eyes falling shut. “I only need a second.”

“I can hear the boys coming down.” Phil warns.

Yes, there is the faint sound of slamming footsteps, from the direction of the stairway. It comes closer and closer, louder and louder, like a terrible boss battle approaching. Or something. Technoblade doesn’t know, he’s so tired now in the moment, and he just turns his head to see Tommy burst out from the stairwell, faltering only a second to take in the state of them.

“Eyyy.” Techno says, as Phil gives a small wave, perfectly casual.

“YOU’RE NOT ZOMBIE FOOD!” Tommy screams out, throwing himself at Techno on the floor, Technoblade grunting at the sudden child projectile. He still holds onto the kid as tightly as he’s able to, letting Tommy hug him close.

“Careful, careful, careful-” Phil tries to warn, hand still held firm over Techno's injury in some attempt to slow the bleeding.

“Dad!” Wilbur calls, Phil’s look softening away from the harsh concern for a moment.
“Techno, fuck, what- are you fine, are you okay-?” Wilbur asks, honest fear creeping into his voice at realizing that Phil’s holding his hand over a bloodspot.

“A shelf fell on me.” Techno groans out, Tommy being rather slow in climbing off his lungs, and in realizing Techno’s currently injured. “Not the best experience. Do not recommend.”

“Shit, man, I thought you got bit!”

“Yeah, they were oddly persistent with me-”

“Oh my god, you’re dying!” Tommy cuts them off, hands coming up to hold at his hair.

“Bleeding.” Techno corrects. “Lightly bleeding.”

“This is lightly bleeding?” Phil asks.

“Car crash. Leg.” Techno explains, ever so eloquently. Phil’s expression goes pinched, and Techno pushes himself to sit up, so as to give them all less to worry over.

“What do we- did you get bandages? We need to- Wilbur-!” Tommy stumbles through his words, suddenly far too caught up in overwhelming concern.

“I’ll- go get the medkit!” Wilbur makes a half-step back, ready to run up the stairs.

“I’m fine.” Techno waves his hand up. “It’s fine.” He repeats, taking Tommy by the hand, squeezing tight.

“You’re literally bleeding-!”

“You’re dying!”

“I’m fine.” Techno insists. He takes a breath, and all is right. “I’m home.”

Then he promptly passes out on Phil.

Tommy screams shrill in worry. Wilbur runs off to retrieve the medkit.

Chapter End Notes

He’s FINEEEEE he just needed to be thrown underneath a near death experience. For enrichment. Now we get to have sbi fussing over techno!! YAY!!! it all pays off dont we love the angst blender

Works inspired by this one

[Zomb Zomb Apoplips](#) by [floweringflame](#)

[The Alive and the Undead](#) by [orphan_account](#)

[The Treatment To Loneliness](#) by [Ever_After_AAA](#)

[Surviving the Apocalypse isn't that hard, right?](#) by [Budgiecat2](#)

[Survivors in Apocalypse Movies Rarely Stay Alone](#) by [orphan_account](#)

[Fanart on a time crunch!](#) by [darealwaffleking](#)

[A Broadcast In The Apocalypse](#) by [Echereon \(Exireon\)](#)

[even in the chaos, you held my hand](#) by [acursefromgod](#)

[I'll put down my roots when I'm dead](#) by [toriskullz](#)

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!